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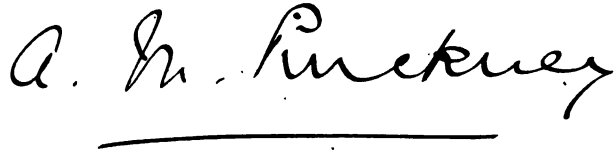

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BEATRICE COPE

OR

PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF A JACOBITE'S DAUGHTER

BY

M. E. LE CLERC

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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MISTRESS BEATRICE COPE.

INTRODUCTION.

FAR away from any high-road, in the hill-country of Northumberland, stands an old Manor-house which is still called by the quaint name of 'Goodrest.'

The house is built of grey stone; and numerous windows filled with tiny panes of thick glass twinkle under the overhanging eaves. The rafters within are low and

heavy, the chimneys enormous, the living-rooms spacious, the sleeping chambers little more than cells. The principal staircase is wide, and rich in carving; but there is an outside staircase, a flight of worn stone steps, steep and difficult to climb, which is more remarkable by far. These steps lead to a terrace-walk upon the roof, protected by a massive balustrade; and from this point of 'vantage a beautiful view is to be seen. On a clear day one can gaze far away into Scotland; since Goodrest is situated scarce fifteen miles from the Scottish Border.

Anxious eyes have been strained to discern signs and tokens from this terrace-walk ere now; for Goodrest was not always the tranquil spot it now is. Once that

sunny garden and those silent spacious rooms were the scene of sore anxiety, and of many trembling hopes and fears. But all this was a great while ago; and few beyond the immediate circle of the Templar family knew the tale which lends a pathetic interest to the stone staircase, and the fair prospect its higher steps command.

The long corridor at Goodrest is lined with oil-paintings of former generations of Templars—pale stiff ladies holding roses in their hands, and wearing pearl necklaces; and stern heroes with high cheek bones and gaunt features. The Templars as a race were not remarkable for personal beauty, one would say; and their likenesses are by no means interesting. Yet there is a picture, somewhat out of place, seem-

ingly, among the row of family portraits, which fascinates the most careless observer strangely—the picture of a young girl.

It is painted upon a very dark and shadowy background, from which the face and some soft folds of white drapery stand out with a weird unearthly light. The picture must be a good one, if only for the intensity of expression which the painter has thrown into the youthful face, and the vivid, almost transparent brightness of its pallor. The figure seems to be pausing at the head of a flight of stone stairs, one foot advanced to descend; one delicate hand draws a floating scarf of muslin close, while the other rests upon the balustrade. The head is turned partly aside, as with a fearful timid movement; the eyes, dark

grey in colour, and somewhat dilated with terror or apprehension, gaze out of the picture with an eager listening look.

This portrait, unlike most of the others, bears no date; but the name is cut deep into the massive frame. Not the family name of Templar; a strange name, nowhere else repeated in the old house:

'MISTRESS BEATRICE COPE.'

And here the impersonation of this young trembling creature, depicted by some unknown artist at what must have been the very crisis of her life, has stood for many years, in the midst of the insipid ladies and frowning gentlemen who are paint and canvas, and nothing more. She has no pearl necklace, and no rose—no simpering prettily composed features—no date

of birth, marriage, and death, to indicate a well-filled duly completed life. She is just 'Mistress Beatrice Cope,'—a graceful shape, a terrified girlish face, and a throbbing heart which once beat so wildly that imagination can still call back the sound of breathless palpitation in the hush of the dusk hour near that picture frame.

There is no record of her in the Templar papers; but the outline of her story lingers, fragrant with the sweetness of unselfish love and high romantic courage, among the traditionary lore of that fair Goodrest in the hills.

CHAPTER I.

BEATRICE COPE was the daughter of one who suffered death for the Jacobite cause. Mr. Charles Cope, her father, had not fallen on any battle-field, but had suffered the far more terrible doom of a traitor to the existing Government, on Tower Hill, one dark wintry morning late in the reign of William of Orange.

Beatrice's infancy and early childhood were passed in the midst of plots for the

restoration of the exiled dynasty, of wild hopes, and no less wild despairs. She lived under the charge of her father's sister, the widowed Lady Dalrymple, during these first years of her life, in a dull, retired house with dormer windows, which stood in the corner of a walled courtyard in the city of London.

A melancholy residence this was, having the indefinable look of a house whose inhabitants are in hiding, or under a cloud; but it was 'home' to little Beatrice Cope, and its melancholy did not oppress her. She was a piece of brightness amongst these people whose hopes were beginning to fail on all hands; her ringing childish laughter was like music in her aunt's sad house, where hushed voices and stillness

reigned. Everyone petted and caressed her; and she knew nothing of calamity, sorrow, and loss, although these trials had gone on around her from her cradle, filling the lives of those who loved her best. Nothing—until, late one afternoon in January, Mr. Sandiland, her father's friend, who had access to him in his prison, took her there, that he might see her for the last time.

Very faint and confused were Beatrice's after-memories of this, though she was five years old then, and a bright intelligent child. Surely it is in mercy that the painful memories of childhood often grow dim, while happier ones stand out clear and fresh to the last. At anyrate, although Beatrice remembered the happiness and

indulgence which went before, and the encompassing love of this dear father, 'twas only by a great effort that she could ever recall the last scenes of her life in London-town.

Sometimes, however, by closing her eyes and thinking deeply, she could see the London streets again, looking very dreary in a thick drizzling rain which came on at dusk that January afternoon long ago. She could see the hurrying throngs, and hear the roar of the ceaseless traffic; and could discern the awful Tower of London looming black out of the white mist which rose up from the Thames and shrouded it in vapour. Then she could recall a narrow apartment enclosed within singularly massive walls, where all was

very still, and where two gentlemen—her father and Mr. Sandiland—were engaged with writing materials and parchments.

She did not know how long they were thus engaged, but she knew that her father held her on his knee, nestling in his arms; and she thought she must have fallen asleep in the dim light and the quietness. When she awoke the room was nearly dark, and the writing was finished: a man was bringing in candles. The atmosphere was foggy and chilly, as though the mist crept in through the barred window; the candles, Beatrice remembered, looked each like a dull red sun encircled by haze, to the bewildered childish vision.

She recollected that her father spoke to her, caressing and soothing her; and so

she supposed she must have waked up frightened, as children do in a strange place. Then, sounding out of the far-away years, Beatrice Cope, a woman grown, could hear words which had fallen uncomprehended upon the ears of the child Beatrice long ago.

'I leave my honour safe in your hands, Sandiland. Commend me to his Majesty, I pray you, with all loyal greeting. Say to him that my last thoughts and prayers were for the Cause . . . . . Is there aught left unsaid? Nay, I think not. You know my will respecting this child; persuade Marjorie to see that I have arranged for the best. My thoughts are confused; this close air gives the headache, does it not?—but that will pass speedily, with all

other things . . . . Our conference is well-nigh ended: say me thy evening hymn, my child!'

Beatrice often thought upon those words, after she came to an age to understand them. She could hear the low grave tones in which they were spoken, vibrating in her heart still; and could hear her own childish voice repeating lines written by the good Bishop Ken:

'Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die, that so I may
Rise glorious at the awful Day.'

These were the words her lips repeated then, very reverently as she had been taught to say them, yet all unconscious of their deep significance—all unaware, poor

child, that the arms which held her close were those of a dying man. That some great calamity was at hand, filling the air with its black shadow, she knew well; of its nature she had no conception—so at least the case appeared to her, in thinking of this time afterwards. She remembered that her father listened with bowed head; and that he said 'Amen' very solemnly when the Doxology ended.

Then, after a pause, he put back the hair from her forehead, and looked long and intently into her face.

'Kiss me, Beatrice,' he said. 'The hour grows late.'

After this point her memory always failed somewhat. She fancied that the face her warm lips kissed was very cold;

but her father spoke on in his customary tone and manner, to her and to Mr. Sandiland, whose hands were shaking curiously as he gathered up the scattered papers. Then Mr. Cope asked, almost impatiently,

'Is it time?'

And, as his friend bent his head stiffly in assent, he rose from his seat, and himself put together the remaining papers carefully.

What words were those which Beatrice the woman thought that Beatrice the child must have heard, spoken low while the papers rustled?

'I beseech you, do not let her after-life be haunted by a terrible memory?'

Then came a faint recollection of an opened door—a husky voice outside begin-

ning to mutter a few words—her father's voice replying,

'Yes, yes; we are ready,'—his hand meeting his friend's hand in a long straining clasp.

Little did the child imagine what that parting meant; that that farewell must reach across Time even to Eternity.

CHAPTER II.

BEATRICE remembered that the streets were very noisy as the hackney coach rolled through them that evening. The damp air resounded with the hoarse cries of newsvendors, selling their broadsheets under flaring oil-lamps, and deafening the passers-by with strange shoutings about the Jacobite traitor and Tower Hill.

'What are they calling out so loud?' little Beatrice asked, peering from the

coach window with eager curiosity: but Mr. Sandiland drew her to him, and wrapped her hood closer round her head.

'Hush, my child—hush,' he said, with a groan.

Beatrice had a bewildered recollection of that night as a very unrestful one. She fancied that no one went to bed or slept in the old house, except herself; and that black figures passed and repassed her nursery door all night long, flitting noiselessly up and down the wide staircase. Once she thought that Aunt Marjorie, a tall, shadowy woman with an agonised face, stood for a few minutes by the little bed, wringing her hands silently. But Beatrice never felt sure that this visitation might not have been the imagination of a dream.

The room was still dark when some one came to wake her, in the middle of the night as she supposed, though subsequently she knew it to have been soon after four o'clock in the morning. She was dressed in a new black frock, and taken downstairs at once, along a stone passage where lights were burning at intervals, and whence the sound of distant chanting could be heard. Often in dreams Beatrice saw this gloomy passage, and herself, a small creature with frightened eyes, passing swiftly along it, holding the gown of Mrs. Hawker, Aunt Marjorie's waiting-woman. Then a door at the end was pushed open, revealing a flight of stone steps leading down into the Chapel.

Beatrice knew in her heart that this was

the Chapel—she had been in it every day: but it looked altered, and mysterious, and terrible, so that she clutched Mrs. Hawker's gown tighter, with a little gasp. The chapel was underground, with a vaulted roof and massive pillars. The lights burnt low in their sconces: the Altar, which Beatrice was accustomed to see bright and glittering, was covered with black and surrounded by black hangings. Even the golden Cross above shone through a mist of crape; and the gloomy folds seemed to vibrate to the wail of the Penitential Psalms.

Years afterwards Beatrice Cope could never hear that wailing cadence—that awful chant of the 'De Profundis,'—without thrilling through and through with sud-

den remembrance of her childhood's first confused terror and distress.

Mrs. Hawker led her charge to some prie-dieu chairs at the foot of the Chancel steps, and whispering to her to kneel down by Lady Dalrymple, and to be very quiet, drew back to a place behind her mistress. And the music and chanting went on and on, rising and falling, beseeching, mourning, lamenting with a terrible lamentation: and the child knelt as she was told, with a great sense of blackness and desolation all about her, wondering in her heart what this misery meant.

At last came silence. Even the notes of the organ died away. The voices ceased their solemn supplication 'out of the deep;' and all was still.

A great clock far off upon some Church steeple struck six slowly and distinctly, with deep booming strokes.

Then Aunt Marjorie, who had no chair before her, sank forward almost prostrate upon the Chancel steps, with long sighing sobs, her arms stretched out, and her hands clasped.

This interval was very fearful to the child: sobs and tears were all around her, and close at hand poor Aunt Marjorie's agony of tearless weeping. Beatrice did not cry herself; she could not, being only numb and bewildered; but she knew afterwards that during the long silence her father's soul had passed by a fearful road, and the terrible vigil in the Tower ended then—at last.

After a time the chanting began again; but the words were not those of any penitential psalm. They were uttered very softly and distinctly; the music and the voices seemed to little Beatrice to come from a long way off.

'I Am the Resurrection and the Life' .... The holy words of strength and comfort fell upon Aunt Marjorie's bruised and fevered heart like dew, and quieted the little child's trembling.

Only for awhile—the full swell of the voices in unison soon brought back the tremor; and Beatrice could remember no more in the aftertime.

She did not know how long she knelt there in her place, feeling as though an icy wind were blowing upon her, while the

lights went out in darkness one by one.

At last all grew dark to her, and even the sensation of exceeding cold was lost. A long night seemed to have passed away before she opened her eyes again, and gazed around in frightened misery. She was not in the Chapel then, but in the vast chilly hall, where a small brazier of charcoal was burning, casting a red glow into the dimness.

Aunt Marjorie's waiting-women were clustering about her, chafing her hands and her temples, with low-spoken words of pity and comment upon their lady's strange lack of judgment concerning a tender little child. Beatrice did not distinguish their words; but the opening of the outer door caught her ears immediately,

and she saw Mr. Sandiland enter, muffled up as one who seeks to disguise himself, very colourless, and moving like a man who walks in his sleep. With a little cry she tried to dart towards him, though everything seemed to go round with her as she moved. He was connected in her mind with her father; he might go to him whenever he would, she imagined. Doubtless he could tell her what all this mysterious wretchedness meant.

Mr. Sandiland looked down at her amazed, with dazzled eyes which could see nothing clearly for one terrible sight which was ever present to them, blotting out all else.

'What has been done?' he asked abruptly, turning to the women.

'My lady gave orders, sir,' said Mrs. Hawker.

She would have explained further; but Mr. Sandiland signed to her to be silent, and, stooping down, lifted the little trembling thing in his arms.

'My darling, they rest well that rest in GOD,' he said, his voice almost sunk away. 'Do not be terrified. Thy dear father is with Him.'

'They rest well that rest in GOD!'

CHAPTER III.

BEATRICE often thought upon these words when, in after-years, she could comprehend in some degree from what agony of mind, what wrenching asunder of earthly ties, what overwhelming pressure of anxiety and conscientious scruple, her father, in the prime of his manhood, 'rested;' when out of her own experience she understood from how stern a conflict that rest gave him discharge.

Truly those were terrible days for a man in whom all tender human affections were strong—in whom loyalty to the exiled King could not obliterate personal attachments and anxieties. Mr. Cope had done his work well, to the utmost of his ability. He had been loyal and faithful; he had perilled his life, not grudging the sacrifice; but he had done all this in no spirit of light-hearted daring and confidence, such as animated many of his friends. He had worked and intrigued with a heavy heart, thinking much of his little motherless daughter, and of the chances which the future might hold for her; of his widowed sister also, whose husband had lost his life in this same disastrous Cause which might any day claim that of her brother too.

And during the last weeks of his life, when that which he had long expected overtook him, his chief anxiety was to secure Beatrice from the troubles of the times.

His sister's judgment was, he knew, unsettled by sorrow and apprehension to a degree which must render her an unfit guardian for any child; and therefore his confidence was placed in his friend, Mr. Roger Sandiland, who had been very staunch to him through many perils. To this tried friend he committed the future of his daughter, speaking earnestly of his desire that her life should be happy and sheltered. With him he arranged that Beatrice should be transferred from Lady Dalrymple's care to that of her maternal

grandmother, Madam Hunter—provided Madam Hunter could be prevailed upon to accept the charge.

'Thus her childhood will be secure, at all events; and when she comes to years of discretion she may choose her part,' the poor father said, during the dusk of that last evening while the child slept in his arms. 'I cannot but desire that my daughter should, in heart, choose the Cause for which I die; yet, Heaven help me! I greatly crave a happy lot in this world for the little one. I would fain think that these perilous matters concern not women; but I commend all to your judgment, and to your mercy likewise, true friend. Do not break her peace, if so doing can be avoided—do not call upon

her for aught of service. Let my work and my suffering count for both.'

'All will surely be adjusted long ere the child grow up,' said the other, who was more sanguine.

Mr. Cope shook his head.

'Not so, I think,' he answered, with a sigh; and then he put aside his earthly cares as far as human weakness would let him, and spoke of the child's future no more.

In due course Mr. Sandiland made arrangements for the transfer of the orphan to that new keeping which her father had desired for her. Madam Hunter resided with her son, the present head of the family, at his house of Crowe Hall in the county of Northumberland; and the old

lady replied by the hand of 'Squire Hunter' to the letter addressed to her respecting Beatrice Cope.

Mr. Hunter wrote coldly, but expressed willingness to receive his niece under his roof. His mother, he said, was too far advanced in age and infirmity to be troubled with the upbringing of a young girl. He and his wife would therefore make themselves responsible for the maintenance and education of Mistress Beatrice Cope, trusting to find in her the same obedience and docility which their own daughters did not fail to manifest.

The honest Squire was no finished penman, and his written words were few, though sensible and mightily to the purpose. He was on the Whig side of politics,

and regarded all Jacobites with strong aversion. Such being the case, his house was by no means the home Roger Sandiland would have chosen as advantageous for the child, had not her father's directions been very explicit; but the instructions left were so clear that he had no choice save to carry them out. His hardest task was to convince Lady Dalrymple that thus it must be.

She was childless as well as widowed; and to have her brother's daughter torn from her care broke her heart afresh, she said. At last, however, all was settled; and through the bitter weather of early spring Roger Sandiland travelled with his charge on the long northward road.

In those bygone days that journey from

London to the far north was no trifle, to be lightly undertaken, even in March; for although the days were lengthening, the cold was strengthening, as the old proverb has it; and risk of snow was still imminent.

The weeks spent in travelling seemed like a curious life-time to Beatrice Cope. Journeying on and on along frost-bound roads from dawn till after dusk; stopping at cosy wayside inns, where there was always a great glow of firelight and a fragrance of some savoury cooking; seeing the horses put to and taken out; picking up fresh passengers and parting from others—these and similar incidents of the way afforded endless entertainment to the child, when she was not very cold, or very tired and sleepy.

She was much noticed and petted, each kind heart being touched by the sight of the sweet fresh little face framed by the heavy beaver bonnet with its large knot of crape; and speculation was rife in many a hostelry as to what the history of this tiny lady might be.

But no one ventured on any friendly advances towards the gloomy gentleman her companion, who sat with his hat drawn over his brows, and his eyes for the most part closed, taking no heed of the overtures made to the child.

Beatrice was happy enough under this state of things all day; yet when twilight came on she would creep closer to Mr. Sandiland and cry quietly, oppressed by some over-shadowing of remembrance—

some dim perplexed understanding of her own forlorn lot.

At last the journey ended; and the old Manor-house in the distant north country was reached. Speech grew broader and manners rougher as the travellers approached their bourne; but hearts were kind as ever, or perhaps kinder.

And at Crowe Hall, near the hamlet of Thistlethwayte, in a plainly furnished room called the White Parlour, Madam Hunter sat alone, with a grave face and a troubled heart. She was thinking much of her dead daughter, in the silence of that March evening, while the fire burnt clear and bright. Lucy Hunter's marriage had been a sorrow, her death a heart-break; and the old griefs fluttered again

in her mother's heart, as she sat listening for the sound of wheels.

Her knitting was for once laid aside: she sat unemployed, her hands clasped upon the carved handle of her ebony walking-stick, her firm chin resting upon the fingers thus mechanically pressed together. And before her eyes passed visions of Lucy as a baby—Lucy as a girl —Lucy as a bride; and all the while she strained her ears to catch the first sound which should herald the coming of Lucy's child.

She quite forgot the son-in-law whom she had never loved, in thinking thus of his wife; she expected to see as it were a second Lucy come springing into the White Parlour, and she prepared her

heart to meet a joy which would be more than half pain at first.

Presently Squire Hunter joined his mother in her solitary watch of expectation; but the two scarcely spoke three words to each other. The Squire had memories of his own which held him silent, as he leaned against the high mantelpiece of Dutch carving, a stalwart figure in snuff-coloured clothes, lace ruffles, and tall riding-boots.

Then the long-expected crunching of wheels was faintly heard, succeeded by the heavy trot of weary horses, passing beneath the trees of the avenue. A moment later a travelling-carriage passed the windows; and Madam Hunter's strong old heart began to labour, and beat with an

irregular force. She rose up with an effort, for her limbs were somewhat stiff; and steadied herself upon her stick, as the serving-man, who had grown grey at Crowe Hall and remembered 'Mistress Lucy' well, threw the door wide to admit the newly-arrived travellers.

A gentleman entered; and at his side, holding his hand fast as though seeking protection which had never yet failed, came a little girl in deep mourning. But where was the bright face, the fair curls tinged with gold, and the laughing blue eyes, upon which Madam Hunter had longed to look?—This pale little creature, with her garb of woe, and her dark colouring—the grey eyes already filling with tears, the sensitive mouth already begin-

ning to tremble—could this be Lucy's child?

No vision of that dearest daughter rose up before Madam Hunter in the White Parlour then; only the face of Charles Cope, which had never been pleasing to her, gained fresh vividness in her memory. Her heart gave one throb, and then resumed its ordinary pulsations. Her face was calm and her voice cold, as she addressed Mr. Sandiland with courteous thanks.

'You have had much trouble, sir, I fear,' she said, 'in bringing me my little granddaughter.'

Roger Sandiland was not a very ready man, in trivial matters; and his mind just then was absorbed.

'Madam,' he answered, bowing courteously enough, however, 'I would count no trouble much, which could serve my friend or my friend's child. Mr. Cope was the dearest friend I had; and his last wishes are very sacred to me. He earnestly desired that I should bring Beatrice to you.'

'I am indebted to my son-in-law for his remembrance, although you, sir, disclaim thanks from me. Come hither, child,' said Madam Hunter, with a sudden contraction of the brow, as the master of the house stepped forward to greet the stranger in his turn.

Beatrice advanced at this summons, and made the deep curtsey which the manners of the time required. Her grandmother

laid a hand on either shoulder, and looked earnestly into the face of the little girl before her. But in a moment the hands fell and the look was averted, as though in disappointment; and Beatrice shrank back to Mr. Sandiland, not heeding or even noticing her uncle's outstretched arm.

'She is a docile child, madam,' the Jacobite gentleman said, looking gravely down at the face of his recent charge, now half-hidden against his sleeve.

'I trust to find her so, sir,' said the old lady.

'And one of quick parts,' he continued, with a touch of almost parental pride. 'Somewhat of the finely-tempered keenness of apprehension which distinguished her father has descended upon her.'

'In respect of that likeness she is doubtless fortunate.'

'Yes,' he said, noting no double meaning. 'She learns quickly, and has a prodigious memory.'

'Is that last mentioned characteristic considered an advantage?'

'Surely, madam; I imagine that it would be so reckoned.'

'In some cases, without doubt; in this, to be plain with you, sir—I know not.—May I request your attention for an instant? I have that to say which may prove displeasing; but I intend no offence. Therefore I will put what must needs be said into the fewest words possible, craving beforehand your charitable construction of my bluntness. I intend to do my best for

my granddaughter, in every respect. My son, and my son's wife, will aid me in my task. From them I shall receive all the help I need.—Do I make myself plain, sir?—I desire to admit no further communication with her late father's family and friends, concerning this child. By Mr. Cope's own act and deed, for good or for evil, she belongs entirely to her mother's family now. Her mother's family accept the responsibility of her future; but they must be allowed to do so on their own terms.—I pray you to make this known, with all courtesy, to Lady Dalrymple.'

Mr. Sandiland bowed once more, in grave and silent acquiescence. Then he delivered into Madam Hunter's hand a

few lines, written in the Tower of London by one whose hours were numbered; and the lady's proud calm face paled somewhat, as she took the piece of paper thus offered. First she looked at the superscription, and then she looked once more at the child; and as she gazed she sighed heavily to herself, as one who feels the breath oppressed.

'There has been much misery in this England of ours, sir,' she said, at length. 'God keep the right, and grant us settled days!'

To a prayer thus worded, Roger Sandiland could say 'Amen;' but he took his leave speedily, declining Squire Hunter's offers of rest and hospitality.

Here was no place of refreshment for

him; and he would gladly have taken his friend's child away with him, to commit her to the care of those loyal ladies beyond the seas, who would love and cherish her for her dead father's sake. But this could not be, now. Wherefore he made his bow to Madam Hunter in the White Parlour, and to Squire Hunter on the doorstep beneath the carven coat-of-arms; and Beatrice clung to her protector and cried, so that he had to tear himself gently away from the little clasping hands . . . . The house-door closed upon the Jacobite gentleman, with a dull heavy sound; and Beatrice Cope was left to make her first essay in a totally new existence, amongst strange faces.

Mr. Sandiland dismissed the clumsy

coach at the first village change-house; and, after amply contenting the postilions with money, ordered a frugal meal for himself, which, however, he scarcely touched. Then he spoke with the landlord as soon as the place was quiet; and ascertained that he could hire a horse to carry himself and his valise across the hills when the shadows of night fell.

Roger Sandiland must have known the country well, for he rode by bridle-paths and by-lanes in the gathering dusk, seldom looking to right hand or to left, but directing the course of his horse with unswerving accuracy. As he reached the crest of a hill, the moon rose clear over the valley; and then he did check bridle an instant, looking for some landmark

which he expected to see. Three tall poplar-trees standing together in a south-easterly direction gave him the clue he wanted. He turned his horse's head towards them, riding over much rugged ground, and down a very precipitous lane, more like the channel of a brook than a path for man or horse.

Near the poplar-trees before-mentioned the lane took a sudden curve; and here, by broad daylight, one might have observed that the neglect of the road seemed somewhat artificial, and existed rather in appearance than in reality. The lane wound steeply up among the hills, overhung by green holly-bushes interlaced with ivy, and wild-rose briars now bare of leaves. And presently a small porter's

lodge, nestling modestly under dark fir-trees, showed that some house of importance was near at hand.

Roger Sandiland had made a considerable circuit, and had returned to within seven miles of Crowe Hall. The old porter at the gate peered anxiously into the dimness, asking timidly who knocked so late.

'One who travels by the sign,' was the answer: and at once the heavy bars slid back, and the ponderous gate turned upon hinges too carefully oiled to be noisy.

'Eh, sir, we have had many a scare i' these parts,' the porter said, holding up his lanthorn so that the light might fall upon Mr. Sandiland's face. 'And what make you so far to the north'ard, Master

Roger? The air o' the south be a sight better for your health, I'm thinking.'

'Maybe it is, Job Eccles,' said Mr. Sandiland, quietly. 'My health, however, is somewhat precarious in all parts of England just now. There is not much to choose, as to that: and I have business in the north.—How are all at the house, Job? —I will ride on softly. I can announce myself.'

He did ride on, almost before Job's reply was ended; and soon left the dark fir-trees behind, coming upon peaceful Goodrest set in the heart of its fair apple-orchards and meadows.

Goodrest at this time bore somewhat the character of a religious house. A non-juring clergyman had found shelter there

some years previously, and had gathered about him sundry priests and deacons of the English Church, to whom the new oaths of allegiance presented insuperable difficulties. In the small church covered with ivy, which stood within the park, prayers and psalms were said at each of the Canonical Hours, while the daily offices of Matins and Evensong were duly attended by the whole household. Ladies resided at Goodrest, dividing their time between the exercises of religion, and such spiritual and corporeal works of mercy as were possible in that retired spot.

They prayed, they fasted, they kept long vigils; they wrought much delicate embroidery and some fine lace; they distilled medicaments, and made curious conserves.

Two or three times in a year, the medicines, the preserves, and the lace and embroidery, were taken away from Goodrest very privately, and sold to such advantage as might be by a trusted agent.

Thus the little community maintained itself, after a frugal sort, even sending rouleaux of gold pieces across the sea to be dedicated to that service for which Charles Cope, and many another like-minded, had resigned life.

The real head of the house of Goodrest had small share in the prayers, the almsdeeds, or the simple industries of this portion of its inhabitants. Mr. Templar was deeply involved in political intrigue, and kept up constant correspondence with St. Germains. He was a kinsman of Roger

Sandiland; and Roger Sandiland, together with other gentlemen much engaged in matters touching the Stuart succession, came and went at Goodrest perpetually.

Mr. Templar was a marked man; and but for a certain toleration and half-acknowledged protection extended to him by Mr. Hunter of Crowe Hall, and a brother-magistrate in whose mind the ties of old neighbourhood had also weight, his position at Goodrest must have been exceedingly insecure.

As things were, Mr. Templar had received a lucid hint from the authorities that he would do well to reside elsewhere; and a transparent fiction to the effect that he lived abroad was current among his neighbours, and received ostensible cre-

dence. He did not hunt with the hounds, it is true, or appear at fairs and places of public resort. But he might be met with towards dusk in lonely spots, riding sedately upon his stout grey Galloway, and often accompanied by one or more of those who 'travelled by the sign'—*i.e.*, the sign of the three poplars, which indicated the private road to Goodrest.

Mr. Hunter of Crowe Hall was always careful not to observe Mr. Templar of Goodrest at any inopportune moment of meeting; and as to the companions of the latter gentleman, Mr. Hunter never by any chance knew them again. Mr. Hunter was a kindly man, who thought much forbearance due from a Hunter to a Templar.

The Hunters had scarcely held Crowe Hall longer than the Templars had held Goodrest. There had been an intermarriage between the families too, three generations back. So, although Mr. Hunter considered the present representative of the Templars a wrong-headed and mischievous individual, quite unable to see daylight at noonday, he was anxious to avoid compromising his safety by any animadversions upon his conduct or opinions. Mr. Hunter tried to forget Goodrest, and all the plotting and scheming which went on there. And indeed Goodrest was easily forgotten and overlooked. The paths which led to it, led nowhere else; and whatever harm Mr. Templar might do elsewhere, he kept himself very

quiet in his own neighbourhood. As to the clergy, and the religious women whom some called 'Sisters,' no charge could be brought against them, save that they were sheltered under Mr. Templar's roof, and prayed for a discrowned and exiled King.

Roger Sandiland was quite at home at Goodrest, and regulated his comings and goings as he would. But when he arrived there after leaving little Beatrice Cope in the care of her relations, his kinsman looked upon him with a troubled brow, and explained the meaning of Job Eccles' hinted caution.

'The full history of Charles Cope's end is known, hereabouts,' he said. 'His connection with Mr. Hunter ensures much talk on the subject. It is known that you

were with him at the last; 'tis said, moreover, that you had a hand in all which went before. Therefore I endorse Job's recommendation, Roger. The air of the south is best for you; and I cannot imagine why you thought proper to draw attention upon Goodrest, by travelling north at this precise juncture.'

Mr. Templar did not speak angrily, but rather with the weary displeasure of one with whom all things go amiss. A glance might show that he was an unsuccessful man, in whose hands no scheme prospered. Perhaps an inherent want of hopefulness had something to do with this. Mr. Templar saw difficulties so clearly that whoever worked with him must infallibly suffer some discouragement.

'I was compelled to go north,' said Mr. Sandiland, in quiet excuse.

'Ah, on account of poor Cope's child? But another man, Roger, would have conveyed her to her relations by other means.—However, you did as you thought best. 'Tis a thousand pities Charles Cope lost nerve concerning her at the last. Nevertheless, we have the boy: the girl matters to us little, by comparison. I hear from St. Germains that young Cope is a fine lad, and a favourite companion of His Royal Highness the Prince. He may be serviceable to the Cause, ere many years slip by.'

'His sister may be serviceable also,' said Roger Sandiland, who had now recognized with grief of heart that the triumph

to which he looked forward would not come speedily. 'She too is ours, Templar. Could a daughter of Charles Cope turn Whig and Hanoverian at heart? He desired for her a tranquil childhood and a happy youth. Well, she may enjoy both, and yet be ready when our time comes. When we strike next, we strike surely, once and for all.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE first days spent at Crowe Hall were not happy ones to Beatrice Cope. Madam Hunter's stately dignity chilled and repelled the child thus suddenly cut adrift from all familiar stays. The beautiful austere old lady felt an impatience of the little girl's grief and seeming waywardness; and in her heart lurked a sense of disappointment strong and keen.

'Anna,' Madam Hunter said to her

daughter-in-law, 'I am old to deal with children, and this child is like to be a sore trial to me. 'Tis a little muling puking thing, with no more resemblance to our Lucy than a hedge-sparrow bears to a dragon-fly. One must carry one's burden, be it early in life or be it late: but there come moments when I could wish that my son-in-law's gracious remembrance of the ancient dame at Crowe Hall had tarried a brief space longer upon the road. Time was short with him, I find, when he thought upon this house as a refuge for the little girl. My son-in-law? Daughter Anna, 'tis but a few short weeks agone that Farmer Martin sent up a London Newsletter which he purchased at the horse-fair, with his respectful duty to me;

for the man is ever attentive, and knows that I love to read the news. And in the ill-written columns of that Newsletter, I read details of a dark and secret plot. I said then that I for one could not desire to stay the headman's axe. As men have sown, I said, so must they reap; we have Scripture warranty for that, Anna. And sure they merit the sentence of death, who would again seek to plunge this unhappy country into the discord and tumult of civil strife . . . . . I little thought then that the blood of Lucy's husband had flowed forth upon that scaffold; and that our name and her memory were in some sort dishonoured there. My son-in-law! my Lucy's husband!—that he should so act, and so die! 'Tis bitter, and hard to bear.'

'Nay, mother,' said Squire Hunter, who sat by with the air of one not enjoying the colloquy: 'there is no dishonour in the case. To be sure—an attainted traitor —that sounds ill: yet much of the best blood in England is or has been in the same quandary. I defend not Cope's principles, political or otherwise; but he has paid the penalty, poor fellow, and what can man do more? Let the dead rest, say I. And as for this little hop-o'-my-thumb Beatrice, we can mould and train her as we please, and find her a good husband by-and-bye; one well affected to the protestant succession, with never a glance over his shoulder towards Pope or Pretender either.'

'Son Maurice,' said Madam Hunter,

'hast never heard a certain proverb which says that what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh? The child resembles her father; who shall resolve us how far that resemblance may extend? 'Tis mighty well to say we can mould and train her as we please; but yonder gentleman whose heart was bound to Charles Cope was good enough to assure me, for my comfort and information, that she has a prodigious memory. I warrant me he had done his best to foster it.'

'His tutorship has ended speedily,' Mr. Hunter said, 'and the little maid is but five or six years old after all, mother. Had we charge of her brother, now, instead of herself, we might well discern rocks ahead.'

Madam Hunter paid scant attention to her son's reassuring words. She turned her eyes to the face of her daughter-in-law, who answered the silent appeal with the decision proper to the mother of seven bonny lads and lasses.

'Beatrice needs only to live as a child among other children,' young Madam Hunter said. 'Thus past memories will be effaced by natural pleasures and interests; and her megrims and fancies will wear out also, as her health strengthens. 'Tis ill for a child to be mewed up with grown people, and to witness their sorrow. No wonder this one looks like a plant reared in the shade.'

'She takes finely to our Bessie, though,' said the hearty Squire, 'and that is a hope-

ful sign, mother. Do not you disturb yourself, madam; leave poor Lucy's child to Anna for awhile, and let the future take care of itself. I must go couple up the dogs.'

And Squire Hunter strode cheerfully from the room.

Beatrice Cope did indeed look a white and woeful little creature at this time. During the first days of her residence at Crowe Hall she did little but cry, suffering misery from that sense of strangeness and forlornness which often attacks a child with overwhelming force. She cried, therefore; until her aunt, a firm though motherly woman, told her that they should not be able to love her as they intended and wished to do, if that continued. This

was not very tender comforting, but it answered well; for Beatrice always had been loved during her little life, and hungered for love now in a way which would have seemed strange to the prosaic aunt, had the craving been explained to her. And ere long Beatrice found her place in the busy country-house, which appeared to her so perplexingly full of children. The tearful face soon brightened when Bessie Hunter, a little maiden with soft blue eyes and an apple-blossom complexion, came and looked at the cousin in black, in a mild and wondering fashion. At Beatrice's first wavering smile, Bessie's face dimpled into smiles also; and she thrust a wooden doll into Beatrice's hand, as a pledge of amity. When Beatrice

cried bitterly at bedtime, for Aunt Marjorie and Mrs. Hawker, and for the dear father who could never come to her again, generous little Bessie kissed and comforted her, and promised her a lovely purring kitten 'for her very own.' This kitten was the darling of Bessie's heart, and the offer of such a gift meant a great deal.

Very soon a happier period began for Beatrice Cope. Before many weeks went by the bracing air, the wholesome regularity of life, and, above all, the cheering companionship of other children, brought colour to the pale cheeks and restored tone to the shaken nerves. Her uncle and aunt and cousins were all kind to her, though they made small account of the little addition to their circle whose un-

important personality cost old Madam Hunter many an anxious thought.

Beatrice's sayings and doings were no longer watched, and commented upon, and wondered at, as had been the case in London. An only child is a marvel—a special treasure; when one has a flock around one, the study of each individual naturally becomes less minute.

Beatrice Cope paired with Bessie, the little cousin a few months older than herself, who had won her heart at first sight. These two trotted about together all day long, were sent to bed at the same time, and had their plays and interests and even their punishments pretty much in common. Of the punishments Beatrice was apt to receive rather the larger share, for her

spirit was more adventurous than Bessie's; also she was not accustomed to the rules she now lived under, and did not always understand what was lawful and what was forbidden. But it was not young Madam Hunter's method to punish overmuch, so that even this did not fall heavily upon the child.

Little Beatrice did not know over what old feuds and heart-burnings her childish feet passed lightly; and did not guess that even her name was an offence at Crowe Hall. 'Beatrice'!—the musical syllables which flow so softly had a repellent sound in the ears of her grandmother and aunt; for they knew to whom homage was rendered when Mr. Cope decreed that his daughter should be christened thus.

Lucy, they felt sure, could not have wished her child to bear that name of ill-omen. They made an effort to call the little girl 'Lucy' instead; but this attempt did not prosper, for although Beatrice made no opposition when her black frocks were hastily put aside and she was dressed like Bessie, she strenuously resisted the proposed change of name.

'Tis Beatrice that is *me*,' she protested, piteously; and they could not make her comprehend that she would remain the same under an altered name.

Beatrice soon found that she must not talk of her lost home and friends. Her aunt did not actually forbid her to do so, but she was immediately silenced when she began, and therefore ceased the endeavour.

One day Squire Hunter, catching some words about 'Aunt Marjorie,' spoken by his orphan niece, called Beatrice to him.

'We need hear no more of Aunt Marjorie, little lassie,' he said. 'You belong to us now, d'ye understand?—I wish we could make these dark eyes blue, Anna!' he added, addressing his wife. 'How comes it she has no look of her mother, I marvel?'

He spoke with positive irritation; but Beatrice looked up confidingly, for she had not learnt to be afraid of the rough manner which veiled a kind heart.

'Please, uncle, love me all the same,' she said, pleadingly: and for the moment Mr. Hunter almost forgave her those dark eyes and wide brows of the Copes.

Poor little Beatrice! Hers might have

been an easier youth if she had borne some other name than that of the gentle, devout Queen of many sorrows, who would not willingly have darkened any young life by the shadow of her own. The name inspired prejudice against the child among the friends of her mother's family; and prevented those with whom she came in contact from ever forgetting, as her uncle desired they should forget, that she was the daughter of one who had died a traitor's shameful death.

Beatrice Cope, however, knew nothing of the Jacobites throughout the days of her childhood, in the Northumbrian manor-house. She received careful instruction, such as was bestowed upon her cousins, in both religious and secular learning, when

her precocity ceased to excite alarm. The religious instruction instilled into her mind was of the somewhat vague description which found favour first in Holland, and then at the Court of William and Mary in England; and all political views brought before her were completely one-sided in their tendency, though her uncle's prudence forbade any pointed attacks upon the Jacobite tenets to be made for her benefit.

The young Hunters were brought up to believe William of Orange the deliverer of England, and to consider his opponents as factious and disloyal men; and Beatrice said no word which could show that any early memories survived in her. Her uncle and aunt noticed this at first with

pleasure; and then almost forgot (as they trusted she herself did entirely) that she was not by inheritance both Whig and Broad-churchwoman. No furtive Jacobite —no nonjuring clergyman—alarmed Mr. Hunter by any attempt to gain speech of his niece, or even to inquire into his dealings with her; no importunate letters from members of her dead son-in-law's family annoyed old Madam Hunter.

Yet Madam Hunter's anxieties did not altogether sleep; and she now and then asked her daughter-in-law whether Beatrice ever spoke of her brother, seeming much relieved to hear that young Cope's name never crossed the lips of his little sister.

'Charles Cope was wise in this respect,

Anna,' the old lady said. 'He gave his son entirely to the service of his master beyond the seas; and he gave his daughter entirely to us. Therein he showed both honesty and discretion. He set a gulf between the two young lives, which admitted of no compromise. And by this I see that his friend was under a mistake in imagining that Charles did but think of this refuge for the little girl in his last extremity. He must have laid his plans in her very infancy, considering with himself what course he should pursue when taken in the toils at last. You think Beatrice has never seen her brother, Anna?'

'At all events, not within her range of conscious memory,' the younger lady re-

plied. 'I doubt whether he has even been spoken of in her hearing.'

'That is well,' Madam answered, sinking back in her chair.

She generally sat extremely upright; but when talking of Lucy's children her strong frame seemed to feel a sudden need of support. And her fine face expressed so much trouble and unrest that her daughter-in-law, who loved the old lady well, was grieved to witness it.

'Do not vex yourself, dear Granny,' she said. 'Little Beatrice finds brothers and sisters enough and to spare, here at Crowe Hall. Ere many years have passed she will be in heart and mind as one of us.'

At this Madam only sighed once more,

rousing herself to take her knitting in hand.

'I would the child had not her father's eyes,' she said. 'But she has found kind guardians in thee and Maurice, Anna. When I am gone, you will keep watch and ward over Lucy's child.'

Once only, during Beatrice Cope's childhood, an incident occurred which aroused the suspicions of her aunt. An elderly woman with a sad, furrowed face and scared eyes which dwelt wistfully upon this child, came one day to Crowe Hall. Her ostensible purpose was to find purchasers for the fine French cambric and ribbons she carried with her, strapped upon a donkey; but when the rest of the household were engrossed in the inspection

of her wares, young Madam Hunter saw her stoop down and whisper to little Beatrice, who was then about nine years old.

Madam Hunter rapidly concluded her bargaining, and hurried the woman away, watching narrowly to see that she had no further speech of the child.

Not long afterwards the boys of the family, headed by Madam Hunter's nephew, young Raymond Forrest of Drumscour, came in from following the stag-hounds over hill and down dale. Raymond Forrest was much at Crowe Hall; and, being a year or two senior to the eldest of the Hunters, and a handsome, spirited fellow, was somewhat of a hero with the children there. But on this occasion he contributed

little to the mirth of his cousins, and seized the first opportunity of drawing his aunt aside.

'Aunt Anna,' he said, 'do you know whence that pedlar-woman came, from whom Prue bought her sarcenet, and Anne her lace? We crossed by the Black Scaur and Goodrest Fell this morning; and as we looked over the slope, I marked a woman and a donkey wending slowly down the lane you know of, under the holly boughs. She came from Goodrest. I pray you, have a care of little Beatrice.'

'The pedlar-woman may have called there as she called here, Raymond, in search of customers. Goodrest is a like enough place for the purchase of floss silk and gold thread for embroidery-work.

The woman had a packet of such matters, I remember.'

A flash of increased suspicion crossed the lad's open countenance.

'They may have fitted her out at Goodrest,' he muttered. 'This savours mightily of a scheme, Aunt Anna. I will even take the liberty of tracking that donkey, although the afternoon grows somewhat dusk.'

He set off instantly, fleet-footed and vigorous as though the day were but beginning; and presently Beatrice received a summons to her uncle's private room.

The Squire asked her questions which she did not fully understand at the time; and she answered with such evident truthfulness as convinced him that this was

certainly a first attempt upon her. There was no distress in her replies—they came quite easily and naturally; but when Mr. Hunter asked what the pedlar-woman had said to her that day, she answered differently.

The woman had but prayed God to bless her, she said: and then she suddenly broke down into passionate sobbing, so that her uncle could question her no further.

Did she divine, what the careful disguise of person and speech might well hide from others, that the pedlar-woman was no mere emissary from her relations, as Squire Hunter and young Madam imagined, but Lady Dalrymple herself—poor 'Aunt Marjorie,' whom the hunger of the heart, com-

bined with the fever of an almost distracted brain, had urged to this expedient for seeing her brother's orphan child once more? However this might be, Beatrice never again spoke of the pedlar-woman.

Raymond Forrest returned from his expedition unsuccessful; he had been quite unable to trace either the donkey or the woman. Both seemed to have vanished as by magic from the country-side. Only, about a week later, a pretty donkey, plump and well cared-for, was seen bearing the light panniers in which a certain farmer's wife, whose husband and sons were more than suspected of Jacobitical tendencies, conveyed her butter and eggs to market. And a somewhat stumbling tale was told, in answer to

young Mr. Forrest's imperative interrogatories. The donkey had strayed upon the farmer's land, no one knew whence. Maybe it would be claimed some day—maybe not.

In the meanwhile, Raymond was requested to admire its beauty and good qualities; and Farmer Rudd shewed a remarkable alacrity in observing that if he wanted a shot at the moor-fowl on the heath, or a cast of the angling-rod in Cushat Rill, Jack would be proud to show him where the birds were gathered together, and Dickon had some curious bait which was very much at the young gentleman's service.

The young gentleman, however, declined these overtures; and rode home to Drum-

scour with a cloudy brow. He thought much of little Beatrice Cope just then, and was half-angered that her guardians adhered strictly to the plan of ignoring that past which they were anxious she should forget. Raymond would have had them take stringent precautions for the little girl's safety; who knew that she might not be spirited off some day, and heard of no more? he said.

But those whom he addressed professed to feel no alarm on this head. They watched, indeed, and directed others to watch also, against any further attempts which might be made by strangers to accost Beatrice Cope; yet by degrees this vigilance languished, being apparently quite needless.

The Squire and his wife did not mention the incident of the pedlar-woman to old Madam Hunter. 'Twas a pity, they thought, to increase her anxieties. And when Raymond Forrest requested leave to ride up to Goodrest, and require explanations from Mr. Templar, the Squire crushed the proposal in a somewhat peremptory manner.

'Thou art but sixteen, Raymond, and hot-headed,' he said. 'Wise men, my lad, let sleeping dogs lie.'

With this answer Raymond Forrest had to be content. But he regarded Beatrice with jealous heed, thinking far more of her than of his gentle cousin Anne, or of lively Prue or merry Bessie. He wished he had a right to protect Beatrice, and to

teach her with uncompromising firmness what manner of men they were who laid their plots and spun their subtle webs of policy at quiet Goodrest.

And if she was silent for a few minutes while others were merry, and her eyes grew dreamy as they sometimes would do, Raymond Forrest felt keenly impatient of the mood at which Tom and Wilfrid Hunter did but laugh. He mistrusted those brief flashes of silent thought, which seemed to set her far from her companions; and feared that they had their rise in some faint stirrings of memory not to be quelled.

But after a while Raymond Forrest went away from Drumscour, and from the homely life there, to see the world in London-

town, and to don the gay uniform of an officer in the service of good Queen Anne. In the midst of gaiety and bustle he thought seldom of the little girl at Crowe Hall, save when some chance mention of the Jacobites revived her image in his mind.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the year following upon that in which the visit of the pedlar-woman to Crowe Hall occurred, Mr. Hunter, riding slowly along a lonely road at dusk of a spring evening, was overtaken by Mr. Templar of Goodrest.

After the first cold greeting had passed between the gentlemen, Squire Hunter drew rein to allow the other to ride on; but Mr. Templar slackened the pace of his

horse, and after proceeding in silence for a short pace, said without preface,

'Have you had recent advices from France, sir?'

'I am not in the habit of maintaining correspondence in that quarter,' Mr. Hunter returned, with some offence in his tone.

'Your pardon: but I imagined that at this juncture, perchance—at least, it seemed possible that you might have heard. Your nephew, young Charles Cope——'

'What of him, sir?' the Squire asked, a flush mounting to his sunburnt brow.

'As I am informed, he has had the small-pox severely.'

'Indeed? And is now, perhaps, recovered, or nearly so?' said the Squire, in the tone with which one assumes a certainty.

'By no means,' said the other, abruptly. 'On the contrary, he is dead. 'Tis a thousand pities, for his was a brave spirit.'

'Dead!' Mr. Hunter repeated, much shocked.

He had never seen the boy in question, and had certainly never wished to see him. Yet a thrill passed through his veins when this plain announcement smote upon his ears.

'Ay, dead,' said Mr. Templar. 'He is gone where politics signify naught, and where all discord is made up. 'Tis a grievous loss, though, for we had work for him to do. I have this small packet to render to you, sir. 'Twas sent across the water for one in your care; and will maybe furnish proof of that which I report to

you. The poor lad's diamond buckle, and one or two trifling matters to boot, are enclosed in the packet, I believe.'

The diamond buckle proved to be a small round brooch, such as was worn by gentlemen at that date to fasten their lace ruffles. In the centre was a lock of dark hair, crossed by one of flaxen fairness; and the entwined initials at the back were those of Charles Cope and Lucy his wife. The diamonds of which Mr. Templar spoke were but brilliants of little value.

A ribbon upon which an order had been worn, and two small gold clasps of foreign workmanship, made up the parcel, which was addressed in French to the honoured care of Squire Hunter, at his house of

Crowe Hall, for the hands of his niece, Mistress Beatrice Cope.

Nevertheless, Beatrice Cope was nigh upon sixteen years of age before these things passed into the hands for which they were intended. She grew up in a cheerful home such as her father in his last hours had earnestly desired for her, secure, to all appearance, from the troubles which did but slumber in the realm. And at sixteen she was fast becoming a tall and graceful lady, with an indescribable air of distinction about her, which her cousins did not possess. Her face, too, had a winning charm, born of quick sympathies and ever-varying expression; and, although the features were irregular, the soft dark eyes and delicately-traced eyebrows were indisputably lovely.

She was light-hearted and merry, easily made happy, and easily cast down; taking herself quite contentedly at the valuation of others, which was not very high, and enjoying every pleasure and indulgence afforded her. No one would have imagined that Beatrice's life of conscious thought and recollection had begun under shadow of a great and awful tragedy; that deep down in her heart lay the unforgotten knowledge that her father had suffered death for the banished King James, together with some few haunting memories of other scenes and other faces than those which had for years surrounded her.

She appeared to be simply a bright, affectionate, easily-influenced creature, whose life was certain, one would say,

to be much what those who had control over her might choose to make it.

And to this girl, one Christmas Eve, when the house was jubilant from hall to garret, and the boys were bringing in the holly and mistletoe boughs, Squire Hunter gave a small brooch, a faded ribbon, and two golden clasps.

'You are old enough to have these now, my dear,' he said. 'They are mementos of your parents and your only brother, all dead and gone. Well, well! your father did his duty, as he saw it: no one can deny that Charles Cope was ever a gallant gentleman. And as for your mother, my sister Lucy, the sun never shone upon a sweeter woman. They are gone to their rest, poor souls . . . and the world went

hardly with them . . . I doubt 'tis well over.—Gather up your trinkets, child; but do not wear the brooch openly, lest the sight of it should pain Granny. Her eyes wax dim, nowadays; yet they must be dull indeed ere they fail to recognize the light of Lucy's hair.'

Beatrice Cope went away with her treasures, as she was bidden. She spread them out upon the broad window-ledge in the room she shared with Bessie Hunter, and examined them by the help of the lingering glow in the western sky, and the rising moon in the east. She did not weep; but a soft mist clouded her eyes, and she looked very pale in the pale moonbeams.

Bessie Hunter found her cousin thus,

when she ran upstairs to dress for the evening gaiety.

'Why, Beatrice!' Bessie cried out, 'I have been wondering this hour past where you had hidden yourself. And Tom wanted you to tie the holly wreath for the high mantelshelf in the hall; and Prue declared you had promised to deck the sweetmeats for the supper-table. And, to crown all, Raymond Forrest has arrived from Drumscour, with Ermine and Winifred; and his first words were, "Where is little Beatrice, Bessie?"—But what is amiss, dear heart? You are pale and sad, on Christmas Eve, Beatrice!'

'I cannot help it,' poor Beatrice said. 'See here, Bessie, Uncle Maurice gave me these as the afternoon was darkening.

Does it not seem sad to have missed so much love, sweet one? to have had father, mother, and brother once; and out of the wreck of life's wealth to save but these poor relics?—They are relics of a love I never knew, Bessie. I cannot remember my mother; I know not if I ever saw my brother; and my father—my father was taken from me when I could scarce weep for him, I was so little, and so silly, and so easily comforted. But I have had strange dreams o' nights, latterly; I have seen my dead father present with me continually in my sleep. You know 'tis but faint memory of him that I have in waking moments; and in my dreams I never see his face. Yet some shadowy presence like to his is with me while I

sleep; and now at sight of these things, which he perhaps touched—upon which his eyes looked—the past starts to life again, for a moment. It will fade—it is fading now—your voice and your touch push it away and blot it out, Bessie. I dread it—and yet to part with it seems almost harder still.'

'Beatrice, Beatrice!' Bessie said, implor-ingly; and all the mirth was banished from her face by an appearance like dis-may. 'Beatrice, dear heart, dream no more thus, I entreat you!—Your father lived in ill days; pray Heaven they be ended, never to return!—Dream no more, Beatrice. Have we been lacking to you in anything, here at Crowe Hall? Have you not father, mother, and brothers—ay,

and sisters too—as loving as ever your own could be? Is there any difference set between you, and Anne, and Prue, and me?—Sure, you know there is not, Beatrice.'

Beatrice clasped her cousin close, and showered kisses upon Bessie's cheek and brow.

'There is no difference, sweet one,' she said, speaking in her own joyous tones once more. 'Truly I am fortunate and happy; for I have never known the lack of the home and love which vanished from me years ago.—'Tis only the sight of these things which brings strange thoughts. Help me to put them into my little ebony box, Bessie—the box which Raymond Forrest gave me when he went away from Drum-

scour.—There, we turn the key upon mournful memories; and I am glad again, as befits Christmas Eve.'

And Mistress Beatrice Cope, whose temperament was naturally buoyant, recovered quickly from her depression, and was gay among the gayest that evening, winning a smile even from stately Dame Alicia Forrest, the mother of Raymond and his sisters—although Dame Alicia misliked any special liveliness of disposition. However, Beatrice at this time was reckoned a child, and received a kitten's licence to charm all eyes.

CHAPTER VII.

RAYMOND FORREST, who had become a fine soldierly young man of an open and pleasant countenance, was much at Crowe Hall after this Christmas Eve had passed away. His father, old Sir Eustace Forrest, died in the spring of the year; and Raymond's succession to the title and estate kept him constantly at home during many months. And as time went by a wish arose in Dame Alicia's heart—a wish which Bea-

trice Cope was the unconscious means of thwarting.

Dame Alicia wished for a daughter-in-law from Crowe Hall, and the cousinship of the young people there formed no barrier in her mind. She set her fancy upon Anne Hunter, for her son. Anne was three years younger than Raymond Forrest; pretty, gentle, and well-dowered; submissive, too, and easy to live with, Dame Alicia thought. She did not want a daughter-in-law of whom she knew nothing; and who could say in what direction Raymond's idle fancy might be caught? Therefore Dame Alicia was eager to arrange this marriage, as the marriages of royal persons are arranged; and many were her schemes for the fur-

therance of a partiality which unfortunately did not exist.

Raymond and Anne had indeed a warm affection for each other; but the feeling between them was too completely that of an attached and sympathetic brother and sister to have afforded much ground for hope to a more observant woman than Dame Alicia.

Dame Alicia, however, was not observant; and moreover she was in the habit of carrying any point on which she fixed her mind. She had ruled her husband, by the force of a narrow nature and an obstinate will: and she now meant to rule her son.

The old grandmother at Crowe Hall was the first person to whom Dame Alicia

spoke of her hopes concerning Raymond and Anne: and Madam Hunter gave one of her quick glances from the keen blue eyes which still looked bright although the sight was failing.

'A bride may go one day from Crowe Hall to Drumscour, Dame,' she said, 'but I do not think her name will be Anne. There is no other name, belike, which might suit you as well?'

'I prefer Anne to Prue, I own,' said Dame Alicia, with dignity. 'Prue is sometimes a little hasty in temper, and over-quick with her tongue. There is a moderation in Anne's speech and deportment which well beseems a gentlewoman. Anne suits me best, in all respects, though I find no fault with Prue. And as to

little Bessie, she is too young for Raymond.'

'Then clearly Anne must be the bride-elect, since neither Prue nor Bessie can serve your turn,' Madam Hunter replied; and again she glanced at the face of her visitor, with that hawk-like swiftness of observation.

But Dame Alicia noticed neither the glance, nor the veiled satire of the rejoinder.

'Yes, I think it must be Anne,' she said. 'Anne pleases us all, at Drumscour. And I trust that Raymond will lose no time in bringing matters to a point; for I have faith in the proverb, "Happy's the wooing that's not long a-doing." They have nought to wait for. 'Tis mighty

provoking when young folks are slow to know their own mind.'

'Daughter Anna,' said old Madam Hunter, when her daughter-in-law sat near her elbow-chair late that evening,—'Daughter Anna, here is like to be a pretty coil! Dame Alicia Forrest hath decreed that her son shall woo and wed our Anne. Our Anne heeds him not, and he heeds not her—nor ever will, while Beatrice Cope casts a glamour over his wits. She is not as bonny as your girls, Anna; she lacks their clear white and pink; but she has a witching way with her—I suppose 'tis the same wherewith Charles Cope won her poor mother's heart years agone. No Hunter has the trick on't, I warrant me. And there will be trouble by-and-by, if she stays here.'

'Young Madam Hunter,' as the Squire's wife was still called, although silver threads were fast appearing in her plentiful light-brown hair, paused a moment to consider this weighty speech.

'Why, Granny,' she then said tenderly, 'what trouble should there be? Anne heeds not Raymond; and for Maurice and myself, we desire not marriages betwixt first-cousins, and would do naught to bring one about. 'Tis an over-close relationship, to my thinking. But if Raymond Forrest thinks upon Beatrice, 'tis another matter; and I for one see no objection. Her uncle will not let her go dowerless from Crowe Hall.'

'You are over-simple, Anna,' Madam said, with a flash of impatience. 'Those

who might be well content to welcome Anne or Prue, will look sourly upon Beatrice Cope. And I know not what you may think, but I pity the woman whom Raymond Forrest weds in opposition to his mother's will and pleasure.'

Young Madam Hunter knew her sister-in-law's disposition too well to be able to dispute Granny's saying. And therefore, after many consultations between the elder and the younger mistress of Crowe Hall, Beatrice Cope was sent to visit a maiden lady in the neighbourhood, one Mistress Delia Pettigrew, who counted some third or fourth cousinship with the Hunters of Crowe Hall.

Beatrice Cope knew no reason for this banishment; and, sooth to say, was very

loth to go. Everything was gay and charming at the Hall just then. The brothers were at home; and Raymond Forrest's comings were continual, and perhaps counted for more than she had any idea of with Beatrice. To be sent away from the merry party of young folk to play companion to Mistress Pettigrew in her dull parlour at Whiteoaks, was no agreeable change to a girl before whom life was opening radiant and sweet. But Beatrice had to submit, with the best grace she might; and Bessie Hunter was left, a maiden all forlorn, bereft of her dearest companion.

Tears gathered in Beatrice's eyes as she rode behind old Thomas the groom through the deep lanes to Whiteoaks; and she

brushed away several heavy drops which made the spring landscape dim and misty. The lanes were full of their April beauty, yellow primroses and glittering celandine and delicate hemlock-leaves newly sprung, making many a patch of brightness along the mossy banks. Beatrice, however, could only think that she should gather no primroses with Bessie that spring, and that 'twas a long, long ride from Drumscour to Whiteoaks.—And, moreover, 'twas scarcely likely that Raymond Forrest, for example, should have business to transact with Mistress Delia Pettigrew.

Whiteoaks lay in the full smile of the afternoon sun as the steady old sorrel, the still steadier old groom, and the young girl so full of life, so overflowing with

vivid hopes and fears, wended their way up the last gentle ascent. They made slow progress; for the sorrel horse, although large and strong, had the sobriety of age, and declined to hurry himself for anyone—least of all for his friend Thomas, who to be sure was never known to urge him to any exertion of speed. Thomas was quite contented to dawdle along at the sorrel's own pace, in the pleasant rays of the sun.

'"Twill be strange and quiet for 'ee, Mistress Beatrice, along wi' th' old lady. There weren't never be no stir of no sort, not at Whiteoaks,' said Thomas, offering an observation to beguile the way.

'Yes, Thomas; it will be strange and quiet.'

'And Mistress Bessie, she 'ull miss 'ee, above a bit.'

'And I shall miss her,' said Beatrice, with a sigh. 'But maybe I shall only pay a short visit, Thomas. Old people do not always care to have young ones about them, I suppose.'

'No more they don't,' replied Thomas, who held strong opinions on this point in his own person. 'My old 'ooman and me, we couldn't abide the worrit o' young folk, not continual-like, if 'twere ever so. Now and again, 'tis heartsome to see 'em; but not continual-like, Mistress Beatrice, not continual-like. For why, the ways o' young folk and old folk goes contrairy. But gentlefolk is different, mebbe,' said Thomas, feeling that to account for the

tastes and fancies of 'the quality' was a task quite beyond his powers.

'Well, Thomas, if I soon come back to Crowe Hall, you will know 'tis because Mistress Pettigrew cannot put up with the worrit of me,' said Beatrice, springing lightly to the ground, scarce needing the help of the steps by which the sorrel horse paused.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISTRESS DELIA PETTIGREW —or 'Madam Pettigrew,' as she was now beginning to be styled —would probably have demurred to the undoubting verdict by which Beatrice and Thomas, from opposite poles of thought, assigned her her place among the old people. She had scarcely realized as yet that middle-age had overtaken her. She lived alone; and spent much time in bemoaning a loneliness which peculiarity of

character, even more than natural circumstances, had brought upon her. Having failed to sow the seed of love in her youth, Mistress Delia, perhaps, could hardly expect to reap a plentiful harvest in her age. She was not on terms with the few near relations remaining to her; but she clung to the Hunters of Crowe Hall, who from simple good feeling and native geniality put up with her oddities, and passed over many vexatious encroachments, as being merely 'Mistress Delia's way.'

This lady had often begged for a visit from one of the girls at Crowe Hall; and now poor Beatrice was sent forth from the merry home, to sit in Mistress Delia's parlour, and listen to the endless iteration of a voice which seemed incapable of silence.

Young Madam Hunter had secretly wished to let matters take their course between Raymond Forrest and Beatrice Cope; and she did not think a visit to Mistress Pettigrew very likely to banish fancies and dreams from the mind of Beatrice, supposing any such to be dawning there.

But old Madam Hunter had determined upon Beatrice's temporary exile; and Granny's will was law at Crowe Hall. Since Beatrice must go somewhere for a while, to satisfy Granny's anxieties, Whiteoaks seemed to be the only haven open to her.

Beatrice Cope did her best to appear contented at Whiteoaks. Conversation was not in Mistress Delia's line; but she liked a patient listener to her lengthy

monologues, and enjoyed having a young girl at her disposal. Beatrice had never before known that days could be so long and so tedious; at Crowe Hall the hours flew, while here they crept away with leaden slowness. Life was very comfortable and profoundly wearisome under Mistress Delia's auspices. She did not understand any withdrawal from her society; the sight of a book was an offence to her; and her young guest had no refuge from the flow of Mistress Delia's talk, save in her own thoughts.

Very naturally these turned to Crowe Hall, and to Raymond Forrest. In remembering pleasant days gone past, Raymond's words and looks assumed increased prominence; and Beatrice could not re-

frain from wondering whether he missed her much or little. That Bessie missed her much, she knew well; but the 'how much' of Raymond's feeling was matter of speculation. And one day Beatrice, having gained permission to wander in the country lanes, went further than she intended, being occupied with these and similar speculations.

She strayed beyond the little hamlet which usually bounded her walks, and found herself in a deep lane leading she knew not whither. The afternoon had been beautifully fine; but just at this moment heavy clouds darkened the sky, and an April shower came pouring down, obscuring the distant landscape, and threatening Mistress Beatrice with a

drenching unless she could reach some immediate shelter. The trees were as yet leafless, the hedges only beginning to shew a dawning tint of green.

Beatrice cast a quick glance to right and left; and discerned the chimney of a cottage or keeper's lodge at the brow of the hill where dark pine-trees showed black among oaks and elms already reddened by the rising sap. Making the best speed she could, she gathered up her skirts and ran; and Mistress Beatrice Cope was very fleet of foot. She soon reached the gate within which this cottage stood, and passed through it, not knowing that the circumstance of its standing ajar was strange indeed.

She was breathless and dripping; the

colour in her cheeks was bright, and her eyes danced with mirth as she gained her refuge beneath the deep, low porch.

The pelting storm went on; and while she hesitated whether to knock at the oaken door and beg for admittance to the fireside, or to make the best of her damp garments in the chilly breeze which penetrated the apertures of the stone work which sheltered her, the door was opened from within, and a woman's voice fell softly upon Beatrice's ear.

'The fever is abated,' this voice said, with a gentle sympathy which written words fail to express. 'A little quietness and care, and all will now be well. Only you must take heed to give the nourishment I will presently send, in accordance

with the directions you have received. Not much at a time, I pray you remember, even should the patient crave for it; but a few spoonfuls frequently, Annot Graham.'

In the desire to impress these and other directions, conveyed forcibly, yet in few words, the speaker did not look round; and the person whom she addressed listened too intently to observe aught but the face of her instructress.

Presently, however, both turned towards the open door; and Beatrice Cope saw a countenance which fascinated her strangely. Under a plain hood eyes large and clear, with an exceeding seriousness and purity in their glance, looked forth upon the world; the delicate yet full lips ex-

pressed the firmness of self-control, and the sweetness of a nature made for kindly affections. The great simplicity of dress, at a period when 'people of condition,' as the phrase was, used some magnificence, indicated either a religious life or an inferior station. Face and bearing alike contradicted the latter inference; the former was new and unfamiliar to Beatrice Cope. She wondered whether this lady might belong to the sect of the Quakers, which was then becoming known; but presently dismissed the idea, on finding herself accosted with the customary forms of ceremony. Her new acquaintance, however, spoke with a sincerity of interest which might have befitted the most veracious member of the Society of Friends.

'You are very wet, madam, and the rain pours down. Can I serve you in anything? Here, I fear, you must not shelter; for there is illness in the house, such as might prove contagious to one of your youth, did you enter. In the porch, in this draught of air, you are safe from that risk; but are liable to take cold, in your thin damp dress. Will you walk with me to the house, yonder? You can scarce be wetter, I think, than you already are.'

Beatrice's thanks were quick and winning; yet she hesitated a little.

'You, yourself, madam!' she said. 'You will soon be in my own evil plight; and——'

'Do not regard it,' the lady said; and

the dawning smile which accompanied her words was the sweetest Beatrice had ever seen. 'My cloak turns much weather, and I am not wont to loiter when an errand is done. My business with Job Eccles' grand-daughter and her sick child is over.'

They went out together into the storm of wind and rain, which now raged with all the petulant violence of an April tempest. The branches of the large trees under which they passed were tossed to and fro—the few remaining leaves of last autumn were whirled from each forgotten hiding-place—the little wild-flowers of spring were soon beaten to the earth, and cowered down as though the delicate heads must be utterly crushed. Beatrice's com-

panion threaded the mazes of a narrow walk which diverged from the broader way, winding in and out among thick clumps of laurel and cypress. She walked very quickly, with the easy grace of one to whom exercise is habitual; and her steps did not pause until a door in a massive boundary-wall was reached. This she unlocked, with a key which she took from her girdle.

'Welcome to Goodrest,' she said, turning her sweet eyes full upon the girl at her side; and Mistress Beatrice Cope stepped from the storm-swept pleasance into a very sheltered garden.

Beatrice long remembered how a wavering ray of pale sunshine slanted down over the grey roof of Goodrest, and lay athwart

that sheltered patch of garden-ground. Wherever the track of light fell, bushes and turf glittered with a myriad dazzling drops, and each fair colour looked fairer, because all around was dark and dull. And the thought occurred to Beatrice—why, she knew not then—that her guide much resembled that wandering sunbeam, born to illumine dark and showery places with quiet modest cheer. 'Twas easy to see that life's joyous days had been few with her, and life's sorrows many; and yet that knowledge came not from any tinge of gloom in look or bearing.

There is a serene cheerfulness which tells its own story; and Beatrice Cope needed no one to inform her that this lady had suffered much, with a constant mind.

Goodrest was but a name, at this time, to Mistress Beatrice Cope. She had never heard any talk of the place—or, at least, none that she remembered; and the proscribed family of Templar were little mentioned in the country-side. Beatrice did not know that when she entered the grounds of Goodrest she made her first step beyond the magic circle of her girlhood's happy days. She walked down the pleached alley with a light heart, well-pleased with the little adventure which seemed likely to break the monotony of her existence at Whiteoaks in an agreeable fashion, and more than well-pleased with the companion and helper whom the storm had brought to her aid.

'Is Goodrest your home, madam?' she

presently asked. 'The place has a mighty pleasant name; and indeed I think the very air is full of rest and peace. We know little of the wind and rain now; and without the shelter of these walls 'twas all we could do to fight our way along.'

'Goodrest has formed a shelter against a worse storm than that which you and I have come through together,' the lady said. 'In some sort it is my home; but I am not the mistress here. I am but one among many who share the protection of this quiet spot, and the peace of its repose. Yet I have interest enough to procure you every assistance and accommodation which our household can offer. My name is Agnes Ingram; and I have dwelt here during seven long years.'

'And my name, madam, is Beatrice Cope,' the young girl replied, with shy yet eager frankness. 'I am staying with Madam Pettigrew, at Whiteoaks; and I missed the right turning in the lanes down by the hamlet of Whitecross, this afternoon. Then the rain came in floods; and I espied the chimney of yon little lodge among the trees.'

Agnes Ingram turned her head at the sound of the name—'Beatrice Cope.' She looked at the girl who spoke with a new interest, wistful and pathetic. This, however, was not openly manifest; and Beatrice finished her sentence without remarking aught peculiar in the listener's manner of hearkening.

'You are, then, only visiting Whiteoaks?' asked Agnes.

'Yes,' said Beatrice. 'My home is away yonder to the westward, across the Black Scaur, and over that bleak range of heathy hills. I dwell in my uncle's family, at Crowe Hall.'

Agnes Ingram inclined her head.

'The Hunters of Crowe Hall are often spoken of in these parts,' she said.

By this time they were entering the house itself, and presently crossed a small hall or vestibule, hung with armour and accoutrements long since disused, but polished and cared for by some diligent hands. Agnes Ingram led the way across a flagged passage, and up two or three

steep steps. Then she opened a door; and Beatrice heard the rushing and pelting of the rain upon glazed windows. The apartment into which she was ushered was long and wide, and well lighted by several casements. The first glance showed it to be a room in which much work was done by neat and orderly people. Embroidery-frames and copying-desks were placed where the best light might fall upon them; and at a large table in the centre a figure not unlike that of Agnes Ingram bent low over many folds of woollen material which a pair of strong white hands were cutting and shaping skilfully. Eight or ten women, some scarce older than Beatrice Cope, some fast advancing to life's meridian, sat or

stood before the desks and frames. All were occupied; each hand moved with the firmness and assurance of success which long practice in any art gives. And a fresh young voice was singing sweetly—so sweetly that Beatrice, who loved music of any sort, paused a moment the better to hear the strain. It was an old religious melody, beautiful and quaint—

'O happy harbour of the Saints!
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

. . . . . .

'Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green,
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

'Quite through the streets, with silver sound,
The flood of Life doth flow;
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of Life doth grow.

'There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the Angels sit,
And evermore do sing.'

CHAPTER IX.

WITH these words the songstress, a girl weaving lace upon a pillow, fell suddenly silent, whether because of some knot or inequality in her thread, or in consequence of the entrance of a stranger, Beatrice did not know. And in the stillness which followed, Agnes Ingram presented Mistress Beatrice Cope to the lady at the table, who seemed to hold a chief place among the other gentlewomen.

Now it is commonly noticed concerning women in all ranks that they settle the smallest matter with the greatest multiplicity of words, often expending an amount of talk and comment quite disproportioned to the triviality they have to adjust. At Crowe Hall, for instance, the reception of an unexpected visitor, dripping wet and somewhat astray as to her homeward road, would have proved excitement sufficient to set every tongue in the house going fast and long. But here at Goodrest all were occupied; and moreover it was a rule of life to be somewhat chary of unnecessary words.

To furnish Mistress Beatrice Cope with dry clothing; to appoint her a chamber for the night, since the rain continued to

fall with force sufficient to render the lanes difficult for female travelling; to despatch a messenger to Whiteoaks with explanation of her whereabouts—seemed a very simple affair to Agnes Ingram, and the elder lady upon whom the control of this orderly household devolved. Few words sufficed, as to this. But of kindly glances, and courteous welcome, there was no lack. Each person in the room raised her head from her work with a little gentle bow and smile, as Beatrice passed with her first friend towards a door at the opposite end of the apartment. They made her heartily welcome to all they had, and all which they could do for her; but, seeing that she had no present need of any save Agnes, they continued their tasks as

usual. And in a tiny sleeping-room, quite bare of decoration, but scrupulously neat and clean, Agnes Ingram brought out a gown such as she herself wore, dry shoes, and stockings knitted of undyed lambs-wool.

'Tis very plain,' she said, with a smile, 'but comfortable, I trust; and, while your own attire is dried, you will not, I hope, feel ill at ease in mine. We are nearly of a size, are we not?—though you, maybe, are a thought the taller, and my shape is somewhat fuller than yours. But indeed the gown fits you to a marvel,' she added, looking approvingly at Beatrice in her new costume.

Beatrice herself could scarce restrain her amusement, so great a change had

the change of dress effected. Her girlish fineries of lace and ribbon, the modish sacque and gay petticoat which she and Bessie Hunter alike wore, her blue stockings embroidered with white floss silk, and her high-heeled shoes rendered smarter still by large buckles on the instep, had given place to soft grey stuff and softer muslin. The dress fell in simple lines to which no hoop gave amplitude; the muslin fichu crossed upon the bosom relieved the plainness of the material, but could hardly be called an adornment. And her hair, which was always arranged in a multitude of loose ringlets and more studied waves, had been thoroughly damped by the shower, and hung straight and mournful at its full length.

'Indeed, I think your hair must even follow my fashions too,' said Agnes Ingram, noticing this defect in Beatrice's toilette.

And, ere many minutes elapsed, she had gathered the smooth luxuriant tresses into one thick braid, thus making the transformation still more complete.

After this the two descended the stairs together; and Beatrice Cope sat among the ladies of Goodrest, well entertained in watching the skill and taste of their handicraft, and listening with pleasure to the singing which took the place of conversation at this time. First one and then another would chant some sweet strain, often plaintive, sometimes stirring, always of a religious tenour.

Beatrice Cope thought that work might

well be orderly and harmonious which was done to the accompaniment of canticles like these. She noticed the tranquil calm of the faces around her—a calm not of apathy or dulness, but of peace. The owners of those faces were satisfied, she thought. There was no unrestful craving hidden under the quiet brows; no lurking bitterness or fretfulness to be revealed by some chance tension of the lips, some sharper accent of the voice. In Agnes Ingram's face natural beauty aided the expression of thoughts and feelings more beautiful still; but over each countenance brooded the serenity which comes from well-spent days, and labours in which all thought of self fades gradually out of sight.

Presently the sound of a bell caused an immediate cessation of every employment. The ladies rose one by one, passing out of the room in an order which seemed to be habitual. Only Agnes lingered, taking Beatrice's hand in hers.

'Tis the summons to prayer,' she said. 'We keep the Hours very strictly, in this family; and 'tis marvellous how the oft-recurring chime of the bell sanctifies and tranquillizes all toil. No one is weary, no one is hurried or overwrought, here at Goodrest. Will you come with us to the Church, madam? You too, without doubt, hold the Anglo-Catholic Faith in its entirety?'

Now as to this last query Beatrice was not very competent to give an answer;

but with regard to the first she shewed no hesitation. Indeed, 'tis hard to say whither Agnes Ingram could have beckoned, that Beatrice might be unwilling to follow. Thus easily and completely is the heart of a girl won by a sweet and gracious woman somewhat further advanced in life than herself.

Beatrice went with Agnes to the Church which stood, as has been said, at a short distance from the house. The approach to the sacred building was through a yew-hedge of uncommon size and thickness, in the heart of which a narrow walk had been cut. The strong branches with their close dark leaves formed a canopy almost impervious to rain; and the hedge and the walk within were held to be mighty

curious, and were much accounted of at Goodrest. This walk was also very convenient, since the family went to and from their Church at all hours of the day and night, and in all descriptions of weather.

The Church itself was dedicated in the name of S. Bride, that favourite saint of the North Country; and was of Norman architecture, of a very early date. Many centuries had worn away all sharpness from the outlines, within and without; and the thick walls were studded with brasses recording the names of departed Templars, and the feats of arms they achieved. Their banners, faded, torn, and dim, drooped from the rafters of the clerestory; their bones lay beneath the marble pavement, quiet enough now. And the

hands of gentle women kept the little Church in a great neatness and purity; and light feet came and went perpetually, while the martial heroes slept beneath their noiseless tread.

The voice of prayer and praise was seldom silent within the walls of S. Bride. Priests and deacons kept midnight vigil there, pleading for the Church they saw in peril of being humbled to the very dust. On all hands, the outlook was dark for them, as Queen Anne's declining days drew slowly to a close. Their allegiance to their Stuart King was firm and true; yet he had been bred up in the Roman Communion, and his dealings with the Church of the country over which he came to reign were dubious in the ex-

treme. If James the Third inherited the spirit of his father, there might be more Bishops in the Tower of London when he sat securely on his throne. And yet the opposite side of the picture was darker still. If the nation rejected its rightful sovereign once more, a flood of free-thought, of immorality, of bare and meagre Protestantism, must pour in upon the land from Germany. The leaven introduced into the Church of England by William of Orange was working and gaining strength; that leaven against which the saintly Bishop Ken had given forth his testimony in agony of soul. The foundations were being sapped; the glory of Catholicity could not depart from England, but might be dimmed, ob-

scured, and hidden throughout many generations.

And, with the dread of this consummation ever before their eyes, the clergy of Goodrest fasted and prayed; while devout laymen, set apart for some special service, shared their vigil from time to time. And the women, who could but wait, and pray the secret prayers of the helpless, and toil with hand and brain to furnish forth means for those enterprises which others were to conduct, knelt oftener and oftener before the Altar where all care might be laid down, for awhile.

Beatrice Cope was not accustomed to hear the daily offices of the Church performed; for at Crowe Hall one service on Sunday, and one lengthy sermon from the

chaplain during the week, were held to fulfil all obligations and to meet all spiritual requirements. But hidden fibres of her nature thrilled responsive to the grave and reverent worship in the little Church, where the light was fading. The musical voice of the officiating priest, the low responses of the kneeling congregation whose every gesture acknowledged a Divine and Awful Presence in their midst, the very care with which each detail of the simple ceremonial was dwelt upon, affected Beatrice's imagination powerfully.

Strange subtle sympathy between dead father and living daughter!—No lapse of years, no compliant docility of a very teachable nature, could make 'the use of Geneva' otherwise than a foreign use to

the soul of Beatrice Cope. What she missed, she knew not; until, in the quiet Church of S. Bride, she found that which had vanished out of her life for thirteen long years.

Agnes Ingram knelt at her side, in the exceeding abstraction and motionless quiet wherewith these devout women of Goodrest were wont to submit themselves to the holy influences which brooded over their souls. The passivity of their worship was one of its most remarkable features. With them there was no anxious striving after a certain height and measure of devotion—no excitement, no effort; but rather an intense realization of the drawing near of the Divine to the earthly—an entire yielding of body, soul and spirit

to the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Such worship, maybe, is only possible to the pure in heart, who 'see GOD.'

And those to whom that all-sufficing Vision is granted, ask no more. They cannot speak of that which they feel and know; but in their hearts a voice speaks continually, saying, 'This is the way; walk ye in it;' and through life's severest trials they possess their souls in peace.

CHAPTER X.

IN the hall of the house, after Evening Prayer, Mr. Templar of Goodrest accosted Beatrice Cope with much urbanity. He had not been present in the Church himself; but his companion, a tall dark gentleman who stood somewhat behind him in the shadow of the staircase, had occupied one of the Choir Stalls within the pierced screen. This gentleman did not speak, or come forward in any way. He merely bowed

to Mistress Beatrice Cope, and listened to the few words which passed between her and the master of the house. But when the brief interview was over, this silent spectator turned away abruptly, and hastened out into the April twilight. The air was full of the fresh scent of rain upon newly-sprung grass; the clouds were breaking into light veils of mist, through which many stars twinkled.

Mr. Templar's friend stood with head uncovered in the moist chill air, as though he needed the coolness and refreshment it could give. His temples were throbbing, his lips were dry and hot. For he had seen a face and heard a voice which forcibly recalled to him one of the supreme moments of his life—a moment in which

he stood forth, a distinct unit in a vast crowd, to meet the gaze of a man who went forward to a fearful death.

'*His* daughter!' he murmured to himself, with lips parched and white. 'The daughter of Charles Cope!'

Beatrice supped with the household of Goodrest that evening; but the gentleman whom her presence so greatly affected, absented himself from the long table in the hall at which the family met together. This occasioned no remark at Goodrest, such absences being frequent, and needing no explanation or apology. During the meal two young students of Divinity read aloud to the company; and to Beatrice Cope this seemed a wondrous pleasant method of improving the time. She knew

little of the world of books; and the biography in hand, being written in a manner to arouse interest, read with much skill, and commented upon by intelligent listeners, came as a novelty to her, and delighted her fancy. She was sorry when the hour for this employment drew to a close; although the discovery that Agnes Ingram was now able and willing to sit awhile with her apart, more than made amends for its cessation.

Agnes was never idle, the rule of life at Goodrest forbidding the waste of stray minutes. Her hands moved mechanically as she knitted a shawl which would one day comfort the shoulders of some poor body; but her ears and her thoughts were none the less at Beatrice's service. And

Beatrice was greatly pleased to talk of herself and her own life to this new friend of a day, in whose heart a face once seen and a voice once heard remained fixed, as is the way with some stay-at-home folk of wide sympathies. The young girl spoke much of the happy days at Crowe Hall; of the Christmas and Eastertide merry-makings; the large hunt-breakfasts at which half the country-side assembled; the skating-parties in winter, the frolic in the hay-fields in summer; the joy of wheat harvest, and the mirth of sprightly dances when the hall was decked with garlands and crowded with guests. She told Agnes Ingram of her uncle's hearty kindness to the boys and girls around him; and chattered of her aunt's motherly fondness and

wise household ways. Gentle Anne, lively Prue, merry Bessie; high-spirited Tom, grave Wilfred, mischievous Frank, and little wilful Bob—Agnes Ingram knew them one and all, from this girl's frank and loving talk. She had a distinct picture in her mind of Granny, too: Granny, who sat by the chimney corner in winter, and the oriel window in summer, and observed all that went on among her descendants—Granny, who was not always perfectly well satisfied with Mistress Beatrice Cope. This last little fact Agnes gathered in the course of Beatrice's chat. Many trifles pointed to it; and suggested that old Madam Hunter regarded her daughter's child with misgivings, in which a measure of criticism was blended.

Then came some mention of the Forrests of Drumscour; and Agnes Ingram, quick of sight and sure of perception, guessed more than Beatrice knew of the reasons which had determined this absence from home.

'Mistress Delia Pettigrew is very kind,' poor Beatrice said, rather mournfully, 'very kind indeed; for 'twas Prue and not me that she wanted to have at Whiteoaks. But Madam my grandmother said 'twas best that I should go; for Prue could ill be spared, just now. She has a cunning hand in confectionery; Granny thinks no conserves like those which Prue makes. And my jellies and creams turn out but poorly many a time and oft. Yet I think Aunt Anna was sorry to let me go—they

were all sorry, except Granny herself. Granny is never sorry, when once she has made up her mind that a thing is to be. 'Tis passing dull at Whiteoaks, after Crowe Hall. You would find the hours hang forlornly yourself, Mistress Agnes, for Madam Pettigrew loves not to see one occupied. She likes to talk, from morning till night. And although she is kind, and it does not become me to reflect upon her manner of conversation, 'tis true that I grow utterly wearied with hearing continually what this one said, and what Mistress Delia replied, and what another did, and why each one thus spoke and thus acted. They are very small matters of which Mistress Delia makes much speech; and she is not always good-natured in her talk.

If life has its sordid seamy side, sure 'tis best not to drag it to the light. Many a day I have seen my aunt grow uncomfortable and ill-at-ease during the flow of Mistress Delia's gossipry. And yet she means no harm; 'tis but the unchecked licence of a tongue neither wise nor witty . . . . . I think I dislike such converse more than Prue does; Prue can ever pick some entertainment from Mistress Delia's words and ways. But to me 'tis melancholy to look and to listen. My thoughts take an ill flavour, at Whiteoaks.'

Agnes Ingram's hands paused a moment in their task.

'And you are right, madam,' she said, looking straight before her with her earnest gaze. 'That which you describe is

melancholy, in good truth. Such women are sorely to be pitied; for 'tis out of a vacant life, a vacant heart, and a vacant head, that they speak. They are to be pitied; but also, I think, to be blamed; seeing that the good GOD formed none of His creatures to endure that vacancy. To all is some humble talent given, the exercise of which should keep them busy, harmless, and content. The recognition of this is, I believe, the secret of our quiet happy life here, which passes in great harmony, free from the strife of tongues. We take pains to discover what each one can do best; and thus the labours of the day are duly apportioned. And when the faculties of the mind are fully engaged, the tongue finds little time to err.'

'Ah, madam, this is a holy place!' said Beatrice, very wistfully. 'Tis a still and beautiful life that you lead, apart from all turmoil. You have lived here seven years; sure, you will never quit Goodrest, Mistress Agnes?'

The girl wondered at the light which came into the large serious eyes of the elder woman.

'Listen, dear child,' said Agnes Ingram. 'I do but wait, here. My father is in banishment for a Cause of which doubtless you have heard mention; one very dear to me is with him in a foreign land . . . . I have looked upon neither face for the space of these seven years . . . . Where they summon me, I shall go—when the time comes. Meanwhile, I do but wait.'

Beatrice trembled very much.

'My father died upon the scaffold for that Cause of which you speak,' she whispered. 'And my only brother died in France when I was but a child.'

After this neither Agnes nor Beatrice felt any desire for further speech. They sat together a short while longer; and Beatrice's little quivering hand lay in Agnes's quiet clasp, and grew tranquil and steady there.

By-and-by Agnes beguiled her back to the old gay talk about Crowe Hall and the pleasant incidents of her familiar life there; and the very vividness and alertness with which Beatrice's spirits sprang up again from their temporary depression and tremor showed her new friend that

the nature of this girl was highly strung, and calculated to experience both pleasure and pain in much intensity.

Beatrice Cope did not accompany Agnes Ingram to the Compline prayers in church, but lay down to sleep in her little cell-like room, where the last sight she saw was the shadow of a plain wooden Cross of Calvary, cast athwart the wall by the clear moonlight, and the last sound she heard was the musical chime of the bell which called all watchers to prayer. She slept the deep sleep of a young, healthy, and tired creature; the same gentle chime breaking the stillness as a summons to Prime failed to disturb her. But she knelt by Agnes Ingram's side once more at Matins; and sat at the long table spread with a

plain breakfast at what appears to us the very early hour of seven of the clock. Then she donned her own clothes, now carefully dried and brushed; took a grateful farewell of the household of Goodrest, and a loving one of Agnes Ingram; and set forth for Whiteoaks, attended by a servant whom Madam Pettigrew had sent to be her convoy.

One whom Beatrice did not see watched her departure from Goodrest that beautiful April morning. The sky was clear after much rain; and the dainty figure of Mistress Beatrice Cope seemed to attract the brightness of the sunbeams, as she stepped along in her pretty tasteful attire. At the first curve of the path she turned, to wave a last salutation to

Agnes Ingram, who stood before the door, looking after this gay-hearted child whose coming had been to her a great and rare enjoyment.

Re-entering the house a moment later, Agnes found a gentleman, who was a frequent guest there, standing almost at her elbow.

'Yonder lady bears small trace of her up-bringing, Mistress Ingram,' he said.

'She has been very kindly dealt with,' Agnes replied. 'Her life has been all joy, at Crowe Hall. Her words tell much; 'tis the simple heart of a child. I pray Heaven that her good days may be many, and last long.'

'Doubtless you know her parentage?'

'I guessed it, at the first naming of her name.'

'Pardon me—but I knew her father well. Pardon me a question which may seem less than courteous, madam. Did she speak to you of him?'

'Once only, sir. She told me his fate, thereby shewing me that my surmise as touching her birth was correct. She also mentioned that her only brother died abroad, some years ago.'

'And, Mistress Ingram, in what manner did she speak of this?—as one whose mind has hardened over the memory of such events?'

'Indeed, no; with great and trembling agitation.'

He bowed, and stood aside.

Agnes went swiftly through the hall, and knelt a few moments in the little chamber where Beatrice Cope had slept.

CHAPTER XI.

MISTRESS BEATRICE COPE returned to Whiteoaks with much food for thought. Her hostess questioned her minutely as to all which passed at Goodrest; and she answered cheerfully and pleasantly, yet with a certain reserve. For one cannot speak freely of all things to all people; and Mistress Delia, Beatrice felt, could scarcely be in harmony with much which seemed to her beautiful and touching in the life of which

she had had a transitory but never-to-be-forgotten glimpse. She kept the memory of Goodrest in her heart as a dream of peace; and Madam Pettigrew's parlour seemed less dull and her flow of words less wearisome, when her young companion thought for a moment of Agnes Ingram.

Yet that parlour, with its dim neutral tints and its lack of warm human interest, was terribly dull in these April days; and Beatrice longed sorely for a sight of Bessie Hunter, and one deep breath of the free air of Crowe Hall. Bessie wrote Beatrice a letter, and sent her a token, by each waggon which passed from Thistlethwayte to Whitecross; but she did not come to Whiteoaks, for ten or twelve miles of road and heath formed a strong barrier of sever-

ance betwixt female friends in those days. And the boys were busy with their own diversions; so that the hours went swiftly with them, and they almost forgot to wonder how the time sped with Beatrice, although they had one and all been loth to see her go away.

Mistress Delia, meanwhile, was very fairly pleased with her young guest. Beatrice Cope was gentle and passive under these depressing conditions; sweet-tempered, too, and obliging, even when her patience was somewhat tried. She proved herself a very paragon of listeners; since Mistress Delia was slow to perceive that thoughts might stray even while brief answers came at due intervals. Sometimes, however, Beatrice listened with

eager attention; for Madam Pettigrew, as has been said, liked to talk of Goodrest, and to compare such details as she could glean from Beatrice with those other details of the life there which were matter of common gossip and report.

If the mistress of Whiteoaks knew anything of the political intrigues carried on at Goodrest, she had just sufficient discretion to make slight mention of them. Her own brother had had leanings towards the Stuart cause—leanings which prudential considerations suppressed with difficulty. Therefore Mistress Delia spoke tenderly of the Templars, as having been 'unfortunate;' and dwelt upon Goodrest as a species of nunnery rather than a place for the laying of schemes and the trans-

mission of gold to France. In truth, it bore both characters, separate and distinct; but in the hamlet of Whitecross and under Madam Pettigrew's roof the former aspect of the house was the one brought forward and commented upon.

The ladies worked many cures upon sick people, and did many acts of kindness among the poor. As for Mr. Templar, Mistress Delia said, he might look in upon his old home from time to time, very privately; but 'twas well known that he, as a banished man, must spend the most part of his life abroad. And she abstained from asking Beatrice whether she had had speech of the master of the house during her short sojourn at Goodrest.

'There are things it is not well to know,'

Mistress Delia said; but she looked at Beatrice with an inquisitive eye the while, and the girl fancied that unsolicited information would please her well. Beatrice, however, was reticent, and made no mention of Mr. Templar.

One afternoon, when all that could be said concerning Goodrest had been said with much amplitude, and the subject was losing some of its freshness even for Beatrice Cope, an incident occurred which restored the drama of her own personal life to animation and vigour once more.

Mistress Delia had been summoned to the still-room to grant an interview to a farmer's wife with whom she had dealings in the matter of eggs and cream-cheese; and Beatrice, declining an invitation to be

present at their conference, and thus hear at first hand that news of the village which she must inevitably hear over again from her cousin, sat alone in the parlour towards three of the clock. She took advantage of the opportunity to open the window, Mistress Delia being no friend to fresh air; and sat leaning out, enjoying the scent of the budding sweet-briar close by, and wondering whether the cowslips were yet showing golden heads in the Home Croft at Crowe Hall.

Beatrice was growing a little paler than usual at Whiteoaks, and her lips and brow wore a shade of pensiveness when in repose. To a young man now walking round the house from the stables, her very attitude seemed listless. But there was

no listlessness in the start with which Mistress Beatrice Cope recognised this new-comer; and her paleness was gone in an instant, vanquished by the beautiful carnation tint imparted by joyful surprise. For this handsome young gentleman, booted and spurred from a long ride through deep country, was none other than Sir Raymond Forrest of Drumscour, now commanding a gallant troop of horse quartered at Berwick upon the Border.

Mistress Beatrice was mightily pleased to see Sir Raymond, as was natural, considering their early intimacy and lately revived companionship; and Sir Raymond, on his side, evinced a very great contentment and satisfaction when he found himself in her presence once more.

And surely 'twas a fortunate chance which kept Madam Pettigrew long in the still-room in discourse with Farmer Matcham's dame that afternoon. Had she known that a guest awaited her in the south parlour, she would have broken off her chat at once; but by one of those happy accidents which now and then facilitate the course of true love, she did not know. The fairy prince walked in at the open window, instead of rousing the echoes of Whiteoaks by an application to the heavy knocker in the courtyard. And with him he brought the glamour which makes radiant the fairyland of youth—the strange, foolish, unreal ecstacy of first love—the magic of a dream never, perhaps, to be fulfilled, yet always remembered even in old age.

Somehow the brief separation had worked a great change in the relation between these two. They met again with a certain eager diffidence on his side, and instinctive shyness on hers, which altered the whole character of their intercourse. Raymond's eyes spoke a language easy to be understood, as they dwelt ever more and more earnestly upon the face of Mistress Beatrice Cope; and Beatrice, while they talked of Crowe Hall with sudden pauses, and a whole world of unacknowledged feeling lying beneath the slight phrases they used, wished that this blissful hour could last for ever.

By-and-by Raymond Forrest asked what Mistress Beatrice did, all through the long day at Whiteoaks?

Upon this she told him the tenour of her unvarying days; and presently mentioned, as the one salient point of interest the protracted ramble which had ended in her spending a night among the religious ladies of Goodrest. Beatrice recounted her little history gaily; and because 'twas not convenient to be always meeting the eloquent eyes which watched her every look and gesture, the lovely frank regard of her dark grey orbs was somewhat averted as she talked.

Raymond Forrest heard the tale nearly to an end in silence, the crimson blood mantling even to the curls of the close brown periwig, with which, in accordance with the fashion of the time, he thought proper to supersede his own far hand-

somer hair. At last, however, he could control himself no longer; and he burst out into a somewhat impetuous protest.

'Beatrice! Madam!' he exclaimed. 'Did you but know one-half of the mischief which has been hatched at Goodrest in times past, and is hatching there now, you would speak and think of the place after another fashion. 'Tis a very nest of treachery and intrigue. Nay, I mean no disrespect to the religious ladies; I simply wish that they dwelt there alone. And were I a man of power sufficient to work single-handed in such an enterprise, I would soon do Mr. Templar to wit that no nominal compliance with a certain sentence once passed upon him should serve his turn. I would rid the country of him,

and many another like him. And I would have no beguiling of honourable gentlewomen—no catching of their fancy with the fair outside seeming of a devout life, while behind the screen of much true piety stands chicanery, and sedition, and——'

'Tis hard to say what else the fiery young man might have added, being now fairly launched in mid-career of eloquence; for Beatrice interrupted him at this point, and his disquisition was not allowed to reach its period.

'There was no beguiling,' she said, with spirit. 'There was naught save Christian charity and womanly tenderness, Sir Raymond Forrest.'

Raymond Forrest rose up from his seat; and whereas he had been very red a few

moments before, he was uncommonly pale now, and there was an odd strained look in his eyes, and a tightness in the movement of his lips.

'Beatrice!' he said; and his voice too was husky and changed. 'Your heart is with these people; they have cast a spell over you, and bewitched you. Years ago I warned your uncle; I warn you now, as I see you before me a woman grown. But I might as well speak to the westerly wind, when it blows wild over the Black Scaur; I might as well——'

'Nay, now you are angered,' said Mistress Beatrice Cope.

She had a wondrous pretty pleading way with her, when she would fain mollify an offended friend.

'Angered!' the young man cried; and then, with haste and impetuosity, as his manner was, he dropped upon his knees beside her chair.

'Angered, dear heart!' he said.

There was silence in the south parlour after this—silence, through which Beatrice plainly heard the singing of a thrush in the garden, and felt the fluttering of her heart against the silken lace which fastened her bodice. Then came a few low half-whispered words; and the thrush sang softly, hesitating in his glad strain, as one in doubt. Then silence again; and the sweet notes without the casement fell uncertainly, like scattered pearls from a broken string.—And then, although no answering words were spoken, the little

white hands made a tremulous movement, and the strong brown ones clasped them in no doubtful clasp; and the grey eyes met the hazel ones, and did not shrink or droop.

And outside, in the sunny garden, the thrush broke forth into a very flood of song, rejoicing in the gladness of his little life, in the joyous blossoming time of all the earth.

CHAPTER XII.

THUS Mistress Beatrice Cope was wooed and won, despite precautions on the part of old Madam Hunter at Crowe Hall. And thus, in few words but with a very great earnestness, a loyal subject of King George gave his sure troth to a Jacobite's daughter; and she made answer with a faltering voice and a steadfast mind. They both spoke the same short phrase,—'For ever.'

Madam Pettigrew was well pleased to find Sir Raymond Forrest awaiting her on her return from her discourse with Janet Matcham. She slightly rebuked her young friend, Mistress Beatrice, for scrupling to disturb the important colloquy in the still-room; and then pressed the unexpected guest to taste a dish of tea ere starting upon his homeward ride.

Sir Raymond accepted the proffer with much alacrity; and he discussed the news of the country-side with the elder lady, until a little bustle attendant on the entrance of the tea-equipage enabled him to change his place, the better to inquire into the progress of Mistress Beatrice Cope's embroidery work. The carved frame wherein Beatrice wrought her

shepherds and shepherdesses, her woolly lambs decked with blue ribbons, and her baskets of impossible fruit and flowers, occupied one of the windows; and in this window at an uncomfortable angle of the curving seat, Raymond Forrest preferred to seat himself, when he had handed the fragrant dishes of tea with ceremonious grace. He seemed to enjoy Madam Pettigrew's conversation, and her excellent tea, with a heartiness which she could not but consider flattering; yet he and Beatrice found very little to say to each other, and their hostess fancied that they did not get on well together.

When Sir Raymond did at length take leave, Mistress Delia commented upon

Beatrice's slowness to contribute her due share to his entertainment.

'Young people should acquire the art of conversation betimes,' Mistress Delia said, with the proud consciousness of possessing a tongue which never tired.

At this Beatrice blushed the beautiful blush wherein the fairest dream of early youth finds expression; a blush in which there is neither suffering nor shame. And while Mistress Delia talked of Sir Raymond, praising his handsome face and his polished manner, and blaming her silent auditor for dulness and reserve in such company, Beatrice's thoughts flew away on the lightest and airiest pinions, and her heart sang its own secret psalm of thanksgiving.

For he had come to her, whose coming revealed the blank of his absence; and her nature, which was very simple and sweet, responded to this new joy without fear or misgiving. The wonder of it kept her awed and trembling; she was pale that evening, but only with excess of happiness. And she heard all speech as through the medium of a dream, the ear receiving sounds which the brain is not at leisure to interpret. She was a creature of sensitive mould; and this love-dream thrilled her with tender mystery, with vague unfathomable searchings of the heart.

Now, if Madam Pettigrew had chanced to step into the south parlour when Raymond Forrest fell on his knees beside Beatrice Cope, 'tis probable that this

veracious history would never have been written. The gentleman would have sought an instant for an imaginary trifle which might perchance have fallen from the lady's work-table; rising from his knees to make his compliments to Madam Pettigrew with a fine colour in his face and much self-possession in speech and gesture. And Beatrice would have sat very quietly in her corner, scarcely knowing what that interruption meant.

For days, weeks, or months, the young pair might not have reached the same point of feeling again. Their meetings could be but infrequent at Whiteoaks, and were certain to be scrupulously chaperoned by Mistress Delia. At Crowe Hall they could indeed meet often; yet

opportunities of confidential speech were rare, in the midst of the large family party there. And thus it might easily have happened that Raymond Forrest's declaration of love should be postponed until certain matters transpired which put courtship and matrimony out of the minds of most North-country folk for awhile.

But fortune had favoured Sir Raymond; and he rode home through the country lanes rejoicing yet dubious. He had won his prize; and was at once triumphant, humble, and perplexed. Triumphant, because in such a suit there is always an element of conquest and victory; humble, for where is the true man who does not wish himself truer, nobler, and better, when another life besides his own is

yielded to him, to make or to mar; perplexed, because he guessed that this day's work would be a sore vexation to his mother, Dame Alicia.

Raymond did not meditate deferring his marriage until Dame Alicia should become fully reconciled to the bride of his choice; but he dreaded trouble in this quarter which he might not know how to quell. His wedding would be robbed of half its joy if his widowed mother withheld her approbation; and her prejudices, he knew, were strong and deeply rooted. Old Madam Hunter in her shrewdness, and Raymond by means of that intuitive knowledge which a son sometimes possesses of a parent's nature, arrived at much the same conclusion as touching the manner and

persistency of Dame Alicia's opposition. But Raymond hoped to disarm prejudice by the frankness and unreserve of his own communication, supported by the winning charm of the girl soon to become his wife.

His task, however, proved a hard one. Dame Alicia listened in stony silence to her son's words, the deep disappointment which each syllable aroused in her mind only revealed by a tightening of the thin well-cut lips, and a contraction of the high, narrow forehead.

When he had finished his story, there was silence; silence, which he broke himself.

'Well, mother?' he said, changing his position as he spoke. 'Well, mother, what do you say?'

'I say nought,' was the uncompromising answer. 'My day is done. Had I been consulted earlier, I might have spoken; now, 'tis idle to waste breath.'

'But you will wish me well, madam, will you not?'

'One may wish that which one little expects. I wish that all blessings may fall to the lot of my only son; yet a hasty marriage is a grievous clog in life. All will be as Mistress Beatrice wills now, I doubt not.'

'Nay, mother,' he said; and he flushed somewhat at the words: 'she is not masterful or exacting. She has played no prominent part at Crowe Hall; she has not been be-praised or flattered. She scarce knows herself for what she is, I think; 'tis so

natural to her to come second in all companies.'

With this Dame Alicia's smothered anger broke forth.

'At Crowe Hall!' she said, repeating her son's words bitterly. 'I thought to welcome a bride from Crowe Hall—one who could take her place as I took mine thirty years ago. I would have grudged her nought; even the diamonds your father gave me on my marriage-morning should have been hers, when her day came round. And now you have passed over Anne Hunter, to seek out Beatrice Cope. 'Tis vastly well, sir; you are your own master, and must make your own choice. Only, I beg of you, spare me the mortification of congratulating you upon it.'

'Mother, I have passed over no one,' said the perplexed young man, in some confusion. 'My cousin Anne, I assure you, has no thought of me. I could not win her, if I would—I would not, if I could. Anne is my very dear sister; with Beatrice 'tis different. She is no drop's blood akin to us, being but the niece of my aunt's husband; and there be many that like not marriages betwixt first cousins. 'Tis better, I think, to extend one's connection somewhat; and the Copes, you know, come of a good Derbyshire family.'

'Ay,' said Dame Alicia, very grimly. 'You will doubtless benefit much by alliance with that family. A family of proved loyalty and discretion, as I have

heard, and by no means addicted to secret service and Jacobitical treachery. There was once an idle tale concerning this lady's father—how ran it?—let me think. 'Twas said he lost his head for murderous conspiracy in the last year of King William; but belike 'twas slanderously asserted, and the gentleman lived and died quietly in the rocky dales of Derbyshire. Your bride, 'tis certain, is very finely connected, Raymond; and the memory of your father-in-law will prove a source of pride. 'Tis pity she is dowerless. Maybe, however, you are over-rich yourself to think upon that.'

Raymond Forrest was not rich, his estate being somewhat encumbered by family charges, and further impaired by

extravagant living on the part of his father in early life.

He winced again, as his mother sent home her well-aimed shaft.

'There are better things than wealth,' he said. 'My mind is made up. I am grieved to pain and disappoint you, mother; but you will love Beatrice, if you do but give her and yourself fair play. She is of a passing sweet disposition,' he added, with the pride of a man much in love.

Dame Alicia, however, would say no pleasant word, and hold out no prospect of aught beyond the stoniest acquiescence. Such sympathy as Sir Raymond obtained came from his sisters. Ermine and Winifred Forrest were handsome and striking

young women, who had seen the world, having had opportunities not vouchsafed to the more rustic damsels at Crowe Hall. Winifred had been 'in waiting' at the Court of Queen Anne; and Ermine stayed much with a married sister at Kensington, whose husband was well-known among the wits who frequented White's Coffee House. The sisters had lively minds, and much facility in dress and conversation. They were greatly admired at Crowe Hall, where they appeared from time to time like shining meteors. Ermine and Winifred liked the Hunter cousins, who admired them so heartily; and they liked Beatrice Cope also, making no distinction between her and Bessie. They were somewhat surprised at their brother's choice, it is

true; but, as they had no wish to offend him, they kept this surprise to themselves.

Winifred said to Ermine that, after all, Beatrice Cope had more of the 'belle air' than their cousin Anne could pretend to; and Ermine answered with the faintest shrug of her shoulders that 'twas a thousand pities Raymond had not made better use of his eyes during his sojourn in London-town.

The sisters knew well how to please the young head of the family; and they proffered a few pretty compliments respecting his bride-elect, preparing themselves to be mighty gracious to Mistress Beatrice during their residence at Drumscour, which was never over-long. Perhaps in their own minds they were not ill-pleased that

their brother should have chosen such a little simple thing to share his dignities.

They listened with respectful sympathy to the lamentations of their mother, and tried to console her by hinting that Beatrice Cope, at all events, would be an inexpensive wife.

'She cares not for finery, nor for costly diversions,' said Winifred. 'Give her but a pony to ride, and a flower-garden to order, and the summit of her wishes is reached at once. 'Tis needless to make much preparation for her here. She will take things as she finds them, and be more than content.'

'Raymond does not speak of any alterations,' said Ermine. 'When young Lord Lambswold married Lady Betty Carmichael,

a year ago, 'tis said he half-ruined himself in paint and tapestry, and silken hangings. The estate will scarce recover the outlay these ten years; and although Lady Betty has money, 'tis tied up tight, so that my lord can make small use of it. My brother is wiser than Lord Lambswold, madam.'

Dame Alicia groaned.

'Your brother is not utterly mad,' she said. 'He sees that since he chooses to marry beneath him, 'tis more decent and becoming to do the thing cheaply, and without ostentation.'

'Dear madam,' said Ermine, ''tis surely wise to make the best of what cannot be helped. 'Twill never occur to anyone that my brother derogates from his position in wedding Beatrice Cope, unless you

yourself suggest the idea. She comes of gentle parentage, and has been bred up in our uncle's house as a fourth daughter. 'Tis only by the witholding of your countenance that the tongues of the gossips may be set wagging.'

Dame Alicia Forrest paid more heed to the words of her daughter Ermine than to those of any other person. Ermine had a quiet firm way of enunciating her opinions which gave much weight to what she said; and she derived additional prestige from the fact that her prudence had been tested on several occasions, and had not been found wanting. Her mother perceived that gossip would, as Ermine said, be the only outcome of sustained opposition on her part; and she changed her

attitude slightly, disliking her son's proposed marriage as much as ever, but ceasing to make any talk against it.

Squire Hunter was somewhat disturbed in his mind when the true state of affairs dawned upon him. The idea that Beatrice might be a less welcome bride than Prue or Bessie did not at first occur to the honest gentleman, so entirely had his orphan niece secured her place in his parental affection. His first pleasure in Sir Raymond Forrest's proposal as touching the hand of Mistress Beatrice Cope, was without alloy; for lurking remembrances made him dimly aware that early marriage to a man in good position would be the safest and best lot for his niece. He was in no haste to part with his own

daughters; but he felt that Beatrice's establishment in life was a thing to be desired. Therefore he was surprised to find that his own wife, Beatrice's loving aunt, received the news of Raymond Forrest's courtship with some nervousness of manner; while old Madam Hunter looked upon her son as though he were the bearer of very evil tidings.

When the tale was fully told, the younger lady said,

'I fear me Dame Alicia will be ill-pleased;' and the elder lady asked,

'Did the lad mention his mother, Maurice?—How does she regard this judicious project of his?'

The Squire was forced to confess that Raymond had said nought of Dame Alicia.

'But 'tis like enough she will be gratified,' he said. 'She has ever shewn a kindness towards our lasses; and I gave Raymond to understand that little Beatrice will have her portion with the rest. He knew that without my telling him, I reckon; but 'twas best to leave no doubt. I dare to say we shall have Dame Alicia over here to-morrow, Anna, all agog to express her satisfaction in person; so be ready to receive her as is beseeming.—Well, well! To think that the first marriage in the family should be little Beatrice's; and she such a small hop-o'-my-thumb but 'tother day, as 'twere. I am glad, and yet sorry too; and if Dame Alicia shews aught but pleasure, I shall hold myself mightily affronted. Lucy's

daughter and my niece is good enough to wed with a Forrest of Drumscour, I warrant me, for as high as they hold their heads.

Madam Hunter made no further remark to her son; but when he had left the room she opened her mind to her daughter-in-law.

'Anna,' she said, 'it needs no wizard to see that Maurice is neither to hold nor to bind in this matter. We have done our best to avert trouble, you and I. But what must be, must be. Raymond Forrest has made his offer, though how he found space of silence in which to do it at Whiteoaks passes my wit to discover. I would trust Delia Pettigrew with few tasks; yet assuredly a tongue like hers

should do yeoman's service once in a while, and I put faith in it as a clapper to scare suitors away.—Nevertheless, Raymond has made his offer, by hook or by crook; and Beatrice has given him her little foolish heart. And her uncle's formal consent has been asked and obtained; and now there will be a pretty to-do if Dame Alicia speaks slightly of the young lady, or fails to esteem the honour of the connection. The matter must go forward now, at all costs; else we shall have the cut-and-thrust business played in grim earnest between our fiery Tom and Raymond Forrest, on some frivolous pretext or other, one of these fine mornings. Wherefore Beatrice must fulfil her weird, and dree her penance, lest worse come of it.'

'She is happy enough now, poor child,' said young Madam Hunter, taking heart of grace to rejoice a little, since 'Granny' received the news of the failure of her scheme thus calmly.

But the old lady was thinking very deeply; and she made no response to her daughter-in-law's words.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAME ALICIA FORREST did not appear at Crowe Hall for several days after the betrothal was duly ratified. Her son, she repeated, was his own master; he had chosen to take his own course without consulting her, and she saw not that her acquiescence in what he had done need be blazoned abroad. The Hunter family, doubtless, were rarely pleased; 'twas best she should remain at

Drumscour for awhile, since her mood was scarce attuned to theirs.

At last, however, Ermine's urgency prevailed. Ermine knew how to hint that 'tis a sad want of taste to allow family quarrels to become manifest; that among the old noblesse in France, of whom she had heard much speech at Kensington, 'tis a point of breeding to mask much bitterness with the outward forms of respect and courtesy. 'Our own royal family,' said Ermine, 'had fallen into the "bourgeois" error of making all differences public; and see what came of it!—what loss of dignity, what loss of public esteem. We greatly needed a reformation in our manners in high places; and if no other good came back with the direct Stuart

line, maybe some polish and dignity might revert to Old England in the train of the Chevalier. Little enough of these commodities came with the Elector from Hanover,' she added, carelessly.

'Ermine!' said Dame Alicia, sternly, 'there is no talk of the coming of the Pretender, at Kensington, surely?'

'There is much talk, madam; but 'tis agreed on all hands that the moment is lost. The moment came, but not the man. And now the Jacobite gentry may whistle down the wind for a chance gone by. Such strange lack of enterprise, in good sooth, may make one believe their cause doomed for evermore. . . . Yet 'tis pity, in some sort. The manners, and the dresses, which came in with this German

Court!'—and Ermine's graceful shoulders made a little movement indicative of French training. 'Eh! 'tis enough to tempt the staunchest Hanoverian and soundest Protestant to cast a longing eye in the direction of St. Germains.'

With such flippancy as this Dame Alicia could have naught in common; and she repressed it severely, even in her favourite daughter. But Ermine's previous words had sunk deeply into her mother's mind; and Dame Alicia's tone and manner were swayed by them, when she did at length pay her compliments to the ladies of Crowe Hall. Towards her sister-in-law she was cold and frigid as ice, admitting none of the cheerful talk of countless small arrangements in which

women delight when a wedding is in prospect. Towards the Squire she was bland and formal; to old Madam, in her ingle-nook, reserved and uncommunicative.

And little Beatrice, the trembling bride-elect, shrank from the cold recognition which Dame Alicia vouchsafed her; from the embrace in which no tenderness dwelt; and from the smile which was more chilling than any frown. She shrank; and alas! her shrinking was perceived.

Dame Alicia felt her power over Beatrice Cope, as the girl's face quivered and her eyelids drooped; and the sense of power aroused in her no generosity of feeling, but rather an irritability which, like coarser forms of cruelty, grows by indulgence.

Bessie Hunter, in a similar case, would have looked her future mother-in-law full in the eyes, with a merry defiance half hidden beneath decorous respect; and Dame Alicia, after many a trial of strength, would have come to like good-tempered, straight-forward Bessie, even had her maiden-name been Cope.

But Beatrice was of different, and maybe finer, stuff. The keenest edge is ever the most easily blunted; the most exquisite harmony approaches nearest to discord. You may throw down an earthenware pitcher, and yet carry it many a day to the well: drop a Sèvres teacup ever so gently, and the chances are ten to one that you can make no further use of it. And thus, in this puzzling world of ours,

natures vary; and a certain toughness of fibre conduces to comfort, in threading the thorny thickets which enclose every earthly joy.

Beatrice had had her perfect hour at Whiteoaks, and her days of dreamy happiness since; but this one day, which should have been very bright, was certainly unpropitious.

CHAPTER XIV.

MEN were beginning to whisper strange things concerning 'The Pretender' and his French allies, when Sir Raymond Forrest, who held a captain's commission in the service of His Majesty, King George, commanded a fine troop of horse quartered at Berwick. The continued silence of the Jacobite party in Scotland boded ill, it was said; and hints of high hopes and dark secret plot-

tings flew about from one country-house to another.

Old Madam Hunter kept her ears open, and gathered up every such hint which she happened to hear. Chance guests at Crowe Hall would now and then say a cautious word or two which showed the astute old lady how the wind set. The regular troops, scattered in handfuls up and down the Border country, were on the alert, Madam Hunter could perceive; on the alert, yet quite dubious what to expect.

As Ermine Forrest said, the auspicious moment was past and gone; and yet 'twas plain that the fire out of sight did but smoulder.

In the spring of this year, 1715, though much was possible, nothing seemed immi-

nent; and Sir Raymond spent much of his time at Drumscour instead of at Berwick. Thence he rode over to Crowe Hall, even more and more frequently, dreaming dreams of his own with which neither Hanoverian nor Jacobite politicians had any concern.

And Mistress Beatrice Cope was exceedingly happy in those days, feeling that the crown and joy of her life had come to her. She had been very kindly treated at Crowe Hall, and gentle affection had not failed her; yet never, since a period so distant as to be almost forgotten, had she known the bliss of being first in anyone's heart. Now Raymond Forrest's love was poured out at her feet without stint or measure; and notwithstanding Dame

Alicia's coldness, her whole nature responded joyously.

Ermine and Winifred Forrest were cordial and kind; though perhaps with a touch of condescension somewhat too apparent in their kindness. For they were much older than Beatrice Cope, and had seen the world; while she had only the homely training of Crowe Hall to trust to, when her own quick wit and pretty grace were at fault under new and unfamiliar circumstances. The sisters felt that they could not have much in common with this unformed little creature; but they told their brother that she would soon acquire the air of a great lady, when skilfully painted, powdered, and patched.

She was very splendid at a great ball

which the Forrest family—Dame Alicia sorely reluctant, but over-persuaded by her daughters—gave in honour of the betrothal. And she was doubtless much admired; since, when the year of the forty-five came round, elderly gentlemen still remembered the beauty and radiance of Mistress Beatrice Cope.

Yet Raymond Forrest thought she never looked prettier than when she came to meet him in her simple gown of flowered chintz, with no touch of powder in her dark hair, or of rouge upon the delicate cheeks, which had a soft tint of their own at such moments with which art could not compare. In the garden at Crowe Hall, or seated at the harpsichord in the shadows of the White Parlour, she was ever loveliest in

his eyes; although he liked her to shine magnificent among the gayest, when need was.

Beatrice was much pre-occupied during the few weeks which preceded her formal betrothal to Raymond Forrest; and therefore took small heed of a change in her uncle's establishment which might else have seemed important. For a stranger appeared at Crowe Hall that spring, breaking the cheerful monotony of the Manor-house with a little stir of fresh topics and interests brought from the outside world and from a distant country. This stranger came by invitation, being well-accredited by Mr. Hunter's most trusted correspondent in Holland as a fit person to undertake the office of secretary to himself in his Justice business and other affairs, and

also to act as tutor to his younger boys, who were of an age to require better instruction than could be found for them in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Vanburgh, accordingly, arrived from Holland; and proved to be a middle-aged man of grave and reserved manners, and singular taciturnity, perfectly understanding the duties he had undertaken, and apparently desiring to hold little intercourse with any member of the family beyond that which these duties necessitated. He wore a Geneva gown and bands, thus proclaiming himself a Calvinistic minister of some description; but he said he had resigned the direct exercise of his profession, finding his talents better adapted to fill such a post as he proposed to occupy at Crowe Hall.

Mr. Hunter was delighted with his secretary, whose useful qualifications were much to his mind. The boys were less delighted with their tutor, but their opinion was not particularly inquired into. The rest of the family regarded Mr. Vanburgh with some curiosity at first, and then accepted him as rather an uninteresting factor in their daily life; until Beatrice Cope made a discovery concerning him which changed all things to her, though no one knew of that which she suddenly discovered.

She was so happy in Sir Raymond Forrest's affection as to have small thought to spare for aught else; but ere long the time came that the Captain must rejoin his regiment, and give his mind to military duties, while Beatrice returned from

fairy-land to common earth once more.

Their parting over, she stood at an upper window watching with somewhat tearful eyes for his last wave of the hat before the thick evergreens on the rising ground hid him from sight.

'And what will you do now, Beatrice? Are you going to mope and moan from this to Michaelmas?' asked a laughing voice; and Beatrice turned to find that her dejected appearance was affording amusement to Bessie Hunter, who had not at all a sentimental tendency of mind.

Beatrice laughed, and dried her eyes.

'By no means,' she said. 'I intend to be busy. My education, I find, is vastly incomplete, sweet Bess. Dame Alicia Forrest said to Prue the other day that

I must be a poor two-fingered thing, because I could not make spun sugar when she asked me. Prue must teach me all she knows; it does not please me to be thought a poor two-fingered thing. I shall learn plain needlework from you, Bess, so I pray you prepare to set me tasks. Prue tells me Dame Alicia says my stitchery is disgraceful; though my embroidery, she owns, may pass muster. And besides all this, I mean to read books and improve my mind; for Cousin Frank credibly assures me that they think me very ill-informed at Drumscour. Also, I shall not race about the park all through the summer days with Bustle and Bounce and little dog Fairy, but shall cultivate a sedate demeanour, and sit much at home; for

Frank likewise informs me that Raymond Forrest's sisters say I am too young and too childish to make a good wife.'

'Upon my word, you have reason to hold yourself mightily indebted to Frank and Prue for their information!'

'Truly, have I not? It furnishes me with occupation for the present, you see. I shall scarce be perfect in confectionery and needlecraft by Michaelmas, I fear; and as to the improving books—good lack, their chance is small! But there is no time like the present: I shall go and choose the books I intend to read now, at this very moment, while I feel somewhat grave in mood. Prithee, don't laugh when I run over my list to Ermine Forrest, good Bess; take it as a matter of course that I

read such literature, if you love me. Come now, and advise with me concerning titles of due gravity and weight. I love to do things thoroughly whilst I am about them; and if one has a doubt about getting to the end of a book, why, the title is a matter of greater moment than ever, in that case, you understand.'

'I understand perfectly; but you must choose your books alone, if you choose them just now. I bethink me that I left dried rose-leaves and spice spread out in no small disorder in the still-room. Hark! I hear mother call me. She knows well 'twas neither Anne nor Prue who left such signs and tokens behind.'

Bessie hurried away, aware that a well-deserved reproof awaited her. And Bea-

trice, after one more lingering look in the direction in which her lover had disappeared, and a little sigh which she would not willingly have had overheard by her mirthful companion, turned from the casement, and sought the west-room where the books of the family were stored in silence and stillness seldom broken from year's end to year's end.

Some bygone Hunter must have loved books better than any member of the present generation seemed like to do; for the walls of the library were panelled with row upon row of calf-bound volumes, together with some very ponderous tomes not easily lifted from their abiding-places.

The sun was beginning to sink in the western sky, and the room was full of vivid

light and black shadowy corners. Beatrice, coming suddenly into the flood of light, did not see that someone was seated at a writing-table away from the window; and went to the bookshelves at once, believing herself alone. Though she had been saddened for a moment, her mind was full of happy thoughts; and as she examined the books she sang, softly yet blithely, a very joyous song:

> 'Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,
> With night we banish sorrow;
> Sweet air blow soft, mount larks aloft,
> To give my Love good-morrow!——'

She had scarce begun a second stanza, when a person unobserved rose quietly from the shadow, and came towards her, saying in low tones,

'My child, do you not remember me?'

'Mr. Vanburgh?' she replied, faltering —doubting—trembling a little in her uncertainty.

'I do indeed bear that name at present,' the low voice said; 'but to you I am at all times—Roger Sandiland.'

This answer was spoken in tones still more carefully subdued; and a silence succeeded, during which Beatrice's heart beat fast, and speech was impossible to her.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. SANDILAND stood in the deep shadow, Beatrice Cope in the sunlight, while they gazed upon each other silently; it might have been an impersonation of stern relentless fate which thus abruptly confronted the joyous young girl.

'I see that you have forgotten me,' said Mr. Sandiland, at last. 'Tis scarce to be wondered at; I should have remembered that the years which are few to me are

many to you. But your countenance is little altered since the day I brought you here as a child. You promised to be like your father then, and the likeness has developed—that is all. Yet I would far rather have traced the likeness in character and feeling than in person, if so it might have been.'

His voice in speaking this sentence touched some re-assuring chord: the pale tremour and sorrowful clouding passed away from the youthful face, which was in an instant all aglow with very different feelings.

'Ah, no! I pray you, do not think so ill of me! I have not forgotten,' exclaimed Beatrice, putting out both her hands.

All dread was for the moment banished

in that flash of recognition—that re-awakening of childish associations and confidence; the real seemed to take the place of vague uncertainties. She feared no future just then to which that voice might beckon her; the last friendly voice which had spoken with her father on that awful evening long ago.

Mr. Sandiland took her hands in his, and bent his head to touch them with his lips. He was greatly changed in appearance by the years which had flown; his head was grey, and his face deeply lined. Care and apprehension had alike set their seal upon the strong features; yet there was a certain nobility in their expression —the nobility of a concentrated aim.

One aim and one desire had indeed long

words just spoken, had weeks ago perceived, than in features.

In person Beatrice now resembled both parents. The dark eyes and wide brows were the only distinctive portion of the Copes; but Roger Sandiland could remember her father with the same impulsive, joyous, variable temperament, stamped upon his every look and gesture in youth, as upon his daughter's now. How the bright lad had altered before the end came! How deep a melancholy had fixed that changing face to one expression!

Yet Roger Sandiland, who had loved Charles Cope well, refused the warning which this thought should have given.

Mr. Sandiland spoke a few words concerning Lady Dalrymple, who had spent

the last years in foreign parts, he said. Then he prepared to leave the room, saying,

'We shall have opportunities of renewing our conversation, doubtless; in the meantime, I need not bid you have a care of your words and looks?'

'Oh, sir! you do not intend remaining here?' Beatrice exclaimed, in dismay. 'That is surely impossible; you cannot purpose that?'

'But I do most certainly so purpose,' he answered, with a grave smile. 'My presence is greatly needed here. Listen, my child. We are now upon the eve of that for which your father laboured in vain. On the eve, said I? Ay, and what if the red streaks of dawn are already glowing

in the east? There can be no failure this time, look you; good men and true have toiled and suffered long enough; the time is fully accomplished. I place a great trust in your hands; I tell you that ere many months have passed away, the King —*our* King—the one rightful Sovereign of this realm, will sit securely on his father's throne. He reigns already, in the hearts of the best and noblest of the land. And until that consummation of which I speak is reached, I must abide in this place.'

'You do not consider,' said Beatrice, with palpitating breath. 'How can I, even for you, play the traitor to my uncle, who has sheltered me and trusted me so long?—Mr. Sandiland, as a man

of honour—as a gentleman—I beseech you leave me free of this matter; do not ask me for service I ought not to perform.'

The terrified, perplexed appeal might have been an echo of words her father spoke, with the very shadow of death upon him, in the Tower of London, nearly fourteen years before.

'Let my work and my suffering count for both.'

He had appealed to his friend's mercy concerning the future life of the child dear to each in that overwhelming hour; but Roger Sandiland was a man of one idea—a man to whose mind the end to be attained had many a time sanctified doubtful means employed. He had walked in uncertain ways since he stood in the

crowd beneath the scaffold to meet the last glance of that elder friend whose sense of honour and of truth had ever been stronger than his own; and all else was merged for him now in the crowning effort, the possible triumph.

He spoke again, firm and low.

'It is necessary that I remain here, unrecognised. I call upon you for no secret service; I merely desire—and surely I have a right to require thus much from your father's daughter—that you will not betray me. Very soon, for good or for evil, all will be ended: sure it must be for good, at last!—'Tis not the King's cause alone, though that might well suffice; 'tis the cause of yonder holy Bishops and Priests, who gave up all

sooner than swear allegiance to the usurper. They have prayed for us throughout the long struggle.—The Church Herself is with us—how can we fail?—And in the hour of success I will protect this household from all injury which might otherwise chance. I will set your uncle's sons forward under the new government. No harm shall fall upon anyone who has shewed kindness to you; that I promise, and I have power to make good my words.'

'And if—if——'

'If I were betrayed at this moment?' he said, helping out her hesitation. 'A traitor's doom would surely be mine; there is enough against me to secure that, Heaven knows!' and he smiled again, a strange smile in which there was no mirth.

'Such a fate would be grievously inconvenient at this juncture. But I have no anxiety on that score. I trust you far more entirely than you trust yourself.—Hark! do I hear steps approaching? We will speak no more of this until the time which even now draws near is upon us. Do not fear,' he added, seeing that she trembled greatly. 'You have but to be silent in this matter.'

Then he was gone; and the steps which had disturbed their conference died away in the corridor. No one entered the room; and Beatrice sank down into the deep window-seat by which she had been standing. Memories of the past came rushing upon her confusedly, as through the medium of a dream. She saw herself a

little child again, playing about a gloomy house where no other laughter than hers sounded; and caressed from time to time by a tall gentleman whose features were now obscured to her, but whom she then called 'Dear Father.'

She saw a faint vision of stately sorrowful Aunt Marjorie, whose ways were strange and fitful; and of Mrs. Hawker the waiting-woman, who had been very good to that little child long ago. Then came the remembrance of Mr. Sandiland, her father's truest friend, whom she now understood to have risked much in remaining near him to the last; then a vision of dreary London streets, and shouting crowds, and of a parting in the Tower.

Strange, the face of her father, which

she had striven in vain to recall, came before her for an instant, like a flash of light, as she trembled at the thought of that unrealized parting. The long straight features—the full dark eyes—the melancholy brow—she saw all again; even the very details of dress seemed to pass before her.

Beatrice made no further effort at recollection then: she bowed down her head and wept, overpowered far more by the sudden perception of all her father had suffered than by any thought of her own orphaned childhood. She was little more than a child still; but a woman's instinctive divination awoke in her heart, and she shrank overwhelmed before the comprehension of a father's agony in leaving one

little child alone in so bleak a world.

Her tears spent, she rose at last, feeling very weary; and then a great sense of perplexity took possession of her. She had forgotten the difficulties of the present in the remembrance of that far-away past: yet those difficulties were surely very real and oppressive.

Who can doubt how the conflict in that young startled mind ended?

Gratitude and duty to her uncle could not compel her, she thought, to betray the retreat of her father's friend. Mr. Sandiland had promised that he would protect the Crowe Hall household in the coming hour of the Jacobite victory; and he had spoken as though a protector might be sorely needed then. He had pledged him-

self to be a shield to the Hunters of Crowe Hall; a guardian friend, instead of a secret enemy; and yet Beatrice determined to watch for a private moment, in which to secure a reiteration of the promise.

She had to face the domestic circle again on the evening of Roger Sandiland's first revelation, with the heavy burden of her secret pressing on her heart. Beatrice knew that her changed looks would be attributed to the recent parting with Sir Raymond Forrest; and she wished—O, how earnestly!—that that simple natural grief, free from sting, free from perplexity, were all she had to bear. Her aunt and cousins were merciful, that first evening; and did not comment upon pale looks and heavy eyes. But Granny took Mistress Bea-

trice to task pretty sharply, as her manner was.

'I trust, child, you do not mean to be foolishly lackadaisical,' the old lady said. 'Sure, a parting of a few brief weeks, with a wedding in prospect, is no such grievous matter to deplore!—Look you, I desire to see a bright face about the house; and the finest sentiment is thrown away upon me, my dear, for I don't understand it. To my thinking a woman, be she young or be she old, should do her duty and keep a cheerful countenance; and with your lackadaisical fine ladies, who would put out the very sun in Heaven because they chance to have the vapours, I profess no patience, Mistress Beatrice.'

Beatrice took heart to smile a little;

and her smile was particularly sweet and cordial, lighting up her whole face, and brightening the grey eyes which were her chief beauty.

'I am not fantastical, madam,' she said, 'and I never had the vapours in my life. Do you not know me better than that, Granny?'

'Come, that's well said; I have hopes of you, after all,' Madam Hunter replied, releasing the slender hands she held.

But when Beatrice had turned away, the old lady murmured to herself,

'The child has had a shock; 'twas not the sorrow of a simple girl for an absent lover which blanched her face to-night. Had Raymond Forrest aught to say to her in secresy, I marvel? Did he tell her,

perchance, of some boyish love turned aside, which takes the bloom from the offering he lays at her feet? If so, 'twas a mighty unnecessary candour on his part, I take leave to think. A young girl like Beatrice would fain believe herself the first beloved. Some jewel is gone from the crown of her womanhood, when she hears of a first fancy placed elsewhere; some note is jarred in the melody which has delighted her. Or it may be that they had their first misunderstanding—their first quarrel, even. A slight matter seems great, to one framed as is this granddaughter of mine. The world is a hard school for such as she is, and the thorns of life are sharp and piercing. 'Tis strange, when one's own life-conflict is

nearly ended, how vividly one can concern oneself in another conflict just begun!'

Old Madam Hunter sighed, remembering past vicissitudes. She had not taken life and its storms calmly, for hers was an eager and a restless nature. But gentle Anne Hunter read to her of the Rest which remains when all these visible things are passed away; and the holy words soothed Madam, so that she lay down to sleep in tranquillity.

Beatrice Cope, however, lay awake long hours, fearing to close her tired eyes, lest in sleep she should utter some word which might imperil the man who trusted his fate in her hands. She and Bessie, sisters in affection, had shared the same room in childhood, and did so still. Beatrice had

never before wished to be without Bessie; but she would have given much to be alone, this night. Several times she started up with a throbbing heart and damp brow, thinking that all was over—that in her uneasy slumber she had spoken out her ill-omened secret, and that Mr. Sandiland must pass by the way her father trod, through her unhappy means. And then, in the pale moonlight or early summer dawn, she looked upon Bessie's sleeping face, so rosy, and pretty, and untroubled, and knew that for this time all was safe. On the last of these occasions, tears came to her relief; and weeping she prayed as best she could for help—for some guiding star to lead her through the labyrinth of her perplexities. After this she slept more

quietly; and awoke to find the sun high in the heavens, while Bessie Hunter, ready dressed, and holding a spray of dewy briar roses in her hand, stood mocking the lateness of her companion's slumbers.

Bessie's cheerful voice banished the gloomy visions of the night. But thoughts of pain came slowly back, dimming the sunshine; and Beatrice's only comfort lay in seeking Mr. Sandiland on the first opportunity, and urging the promise he had given upon his remembrance once more.

'Sir,' she managed to say, 'I am keeping your secret faithfully, as you perceive. I beseech you—I beseech you—promise me that no harm shall come to my uncle's family through your abiding here; for if

any such harm does befall, my very heart will break.'

She spoke with a passion of distress which few could have looked upon unmoved; and Roger Sandiland gave the required promise, with a momentary feeling of remorse.

Beatrice grew thinner that summer, and lost much of her pretty bloom, for the secret thus forced upon her keeping burdened her grievously, haunting her mind both by day and by night. Her face became very pale, unless it happened to be over-bright with a feverish and transitory flush; and truly a mental fever did consume the poor child.

The young Hunters, with that merry Bessie at their head, rallied her merciless-

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. SANDILAND seldom spoke with Beatrice Cope alone; seldom directly touched on these matters in his discourse with her. But now and then he would meet her, as though by chance, in the park or in the adjacent lanes; and at such moments he knew how to make five words do the work of many. She saw him constantly, at meals, and in company with the rest of the family; and sometimes, merely be-

cause his manner towards her was so very calm and unmoved, she was able to forget the peculiar meaning which his presence had for her, and to smile and talk as one free from care. At other times only a strong effort could enable her to disguise her uneasiness; the mingled tremour and constraint, which made each word difficult to speak, each glance hard to regulate.

Old Madam Hunter watched Beatrice with jealous heed, suspecting some hidden care; and Beatrice dreaded her grandmother's observation, although the gaze of the penetrating eyes she knew so well had a curiously steadying effect upon her nerves. When Madam Hunter looked her way, all other thought faded in the one

recollection that the life of her father's friend lay in the stillness of her tongue, the composure of her face, the steadiness of her faltering nerve. Her conscience did not reproach her with double-dealing then, as at other times.

And so the summer passed away, and that memorable September of 1715 came upon the land. It came with blue skies and glowing autumnal sunshine, ripening the fruit in the walled gardens of Crowe Hall, and lighting up the sombre old house with a blaze of unwonted colour. The corn began to wave golden even on those northern fields; the reaping was beginning in some parts, when there came faint disquieting rumours of disturbance in Scotland. These rumours swelled and grew,

creating great alarm throughout the country. This must be a serious matter, men said, when it became known that the Government had sent in haste for the Dutch contingent.

Meanwhile there was great activity among the English troops; and some portion of the regiment in which Sir Raymond Forrest served was sent in detachment into the immediate neighbourhood of Drumscour and Crowe Hall, the border-country being regarded at that time with special anxiety and watchfulness, since at some point or other along the line the threatened descent of the Jacobites from Scotland would surely be made. The very air seemed full of excitement and alarm; but the tide of agitation nowhere swelled

higher than in one little fluttering heart, which knew not how to direct its course in this strange turmoil.

Sir Raymond commanded the detachment; and thus found many opportunities of visiting Crowe Hall without neglect of duty. He did not at first observe any change in Beatrice's spirits, although the delicacy of her appearance caused him an occasional misgiving. Hers was a nature which could cast off its cares; and the delight of his presence had power to restore her to all her former buoyancy. No oppressive thoughts of Mr. Sandiland and the perplexities connected with him ever arose to trouble her, until the last echo of Raymond Forrest's horse-hoofs died away in the distance. Then, indeed, her cares

returned upon her; and through many hours of the night she would lie sleepless, tortured by a medley of hopes and fears. If her uncle and cousins rejoiced over the news from Scotland, she trembled for the Jacobites; if they looked grave upon what they heard, she trembled yet more exceedingly for them and for her lover.

Just on the eve of the rising in Northumberland, when rumours flew from one country-house to another, and the local gentry well affected to the established Government scarce knew what to believe as to the proceedings of their neighbours, Mr. Sandiland sought one of those interviews with Mistress Beatrice Cope which she would fain have avoided, had such avoidance seemed to her possible. He requested

her to meet him in the nut-walk at sun-down; and Beatrice obeyed, as she was wont. This nut-walk was no very secluded place. Should any of the household chance to stroll that way, they would see nothing strange in finding Beatrice there; while Mr. Vanburgh's comings and goings aroused slight interest at Crowe Hall.

Therefore Beatrice, in her pretty chintz gown and peach-coloured ribbons, tripped along that path in the pleasant evening time without fear of remark; and Mr. Sandiland emerged from the small door which gave entrance to the wing of the house in which the library and his own apartments were situated, as one who does but seek air and refreshment in the cool of the day.

He strolled once or twice up and down

the more conspicuous of the grassy walks, bordered by rose and lavender bushes covered with lingering bloom; and then turned aside in the nut-walk, where Beatrice Cope's light dress fluttered to and fro.

At first it seemed that he had little to say to her; for surely 'twas not in order to remark upon the beauty of the sunset that he had bidden her meet him here. But Beatrice waited patiently, knowing that Mr. Sandiland did nothing without reason. She did not greatly exert herself to assist his discourse concerning the weather, and fair prospect of the fruit-crops; neither did she seek to dismiss little Bob Hunter, the youngest of the Crowe Hall boys, who came bounding through the nut-alley, and loitered at her side, because he thought

that she looked dull and pensive. 'Twas enough to dash anyone's spirits, Master Bob opined, to walk alone with the grave Dutch tutor in his Geneva cloak, and to listen to his long words and stiff phrases.

Mr. Vanburgh, however, made short work of Bob, as soon as he deemed it discreet to tire of the young gentleman's attendance. He despatched him on an errand to the house; an errand of no very hopeful nature, as presently appeared. Poor Bob was sent in quest of a certain pocket-edition of Homer, which had been lent by his tutor nigh upon a week ago to the Vicar of the parish, whose classics were somewhat rusty from disuse. Consequently the little Homer lay neither upon the library table nor within the open shelves;

and while Bob hunted wildly from place to place, bemoaning the ill-luck which had turned his steps towards the nut-walk and earned him this troublesome commission, Mr. Sandiland directed Beatrice's course towards the Moss House, where that which he had come out to say might be spoken with least chance of interruption.

This summer parlour was much beloved by the children of Crowe Hall. It stood upon the summit of a steep bank above the nut-walk; and was built of undressed firwood, the crevices being stuffed with dry moss, and the floor paved with pebbles arranged in set patterns. The south side was left open, and commanded a beautiful prospect of distant hills. Here the young Hunters had had their cowslip-feasts in

spring, and their nut-feasts in autumn; and here Beatrice Cope now seated herself, in the darkest corner of the rough bench. Her companion stood beside the rustic table, on which he leant his hand somewhat heavily.

'You do not remember your brother, Mistress Beatrice?' he said.

Beatrice shook her head.

'I know not whether I ever saw him,' she replied.

'Ah!—but those links you wear are a keepsake from him, are they not?'

'Not a keepsake,' was the answer; and with the words there came a little sigh. 'A memento, rather; for, as you know, sir, my brother is dead.'

'Of the small-pox, at St. Germains, several years ago?'

'Yes, surely; so my uncle told me, one Christmas Eve when I was just sixteen. But why do you question me, sir? You, who know all this as well or better than I do?'

'I question you,' said Mr. Sandiland, 'because mistakes are sometimes made, and deaths which are confidently reported are not invariably proved to have taken place. Your brother Charles, for example, is at this moment alive and well.'

Beatrice started, and her colour ebbed away.

'Alive and well, and desirous to see you,' Mr. Sandiland proceeded, in his even tones.

'The meeting, however, demands caution. —Hark! do I hear voices? Some persons pass this way, it appears.'

The habit of listening and watching for sounds and indications of danger was strong upon Roger Sandiland; and his ears had caught the tones of Sir Raymond Forrest's voice before 'twas audible to Sir Raymond's betrothed bride.

Beatrice's paleness changed to a burning flush, as her lover and her uncle passed along the path below the Moss House, talking together cheerfully. One of the Squire's dogs, a fine deer-hound which knew Beatrice well, sprang up the steep ascent. Squire Hunter shouted to recall the truant; and a mocking echo took up his jolly hollo, and prolonged it into weird

thin cadence; whereat he and Raymond laughed.

As they walked on, and the sound of their steps and voices died away, Beatrice spoke, after the manner of one who has no time to lose.

'My brother?' she said. 'Be brief, sir, I pray, for I shall be missed.'

'Your brother has led a stirring and an adventurous life,' said Roger Sandiland. 'He is still young—but four and twenty years of age—yet he has done and seen more than many elderly men. And now his occasions have called him into these parts.'

He paused; and Beatrice looked at him with a mixture of eagerness and alarm.

'My uncle will surely allow us to meet,' she said.

'You do not understand,' Roger Sandiland returned; and he smiled as he spoke —the same smile wherewith he had once declared that he himself had earned a traitor's doom. 'Your brother is in peril, here in England. His only safety lies in the belief as to his death, which has gained some credence. Were he recognized in this neighbourhood, he, and many another with him, were undone. I endeavoured to dissuade him from holding communication with you until matters shall have adjusted themselves, since in my poor mind the risk attending such communication is too great; but he is determined to have speech with you, at all hazards. Therefore I was forced to seek this interview to-day, to prepare your mind, and

lessen inevitable risk. He bid me say that he will linger near the Forester's Ash in the woods to-morrow. Take your own time; go there when you can securely elude observation. Let me see—you sing, very sweetly; yes, yes; that will do. Sing a stanza or two of that song which was upon your lips when I startled you in the library, several weeks ago. It has a catching refrain, and will serve as well as another. When you pause, Charlie will answer you. If he continues the same strain, wait at the trysting-place; if he sings aught else, 'twill signify that you are watched; and you must then walk on without appearing to heed the voice of a stranger. Allow an interval of time to elapse, and return by the same spot. If

your brother then begins to sing or whistle the air you sang as you approached before, all is well, and you can pause and speak with him; if he keeps silence, prying eyes and ears are near at hand, and the meeting must be postponed. Do you grasp my meaning? Much depends upon the due observance of these precautions.'

CHAPTER XVII.

BEATRICE COPE wended her way to the trysting-place next day, in the early afternoon. The woods were very silent at that hour. A drowsy hush brooded over each quiet glade and dingle; the rabbits were asleep in the fern, and the soft coo of the cushat doves only sounded at intervals from the tops of the tall trees. Beatrice's light step fell quite noiselessly upon the moss-grown path she trod. She went straight

on, through sunshine and shadow, with the swiftness of one who does not dare to pause. And her face was troubled, for her heart was ill at ease.

The Forester's Ash, so called because a forester had been killed under its boughs in an affray with deer-stealers, stood within the wood not more than three-quarters-of-a-mile from the Hall. A bare space of ground surrounded this tree; and the superstitious minds of country people found a reason for the width of the circle by saying that where the blood of the murdered man fell, all vegetation had been scorched away for ever.

Not a place to choose for a first meeting between a long-parted brother and sister. Little warmth was ever to be felt

there, and the shadows fell black and deep. But the spot possessed the advantage of being generally avoided; and for that reason, probably, Mr. Sandiland selected it in this instance.

Beatrice looked towards the ill-omed tree as she approached, and strained her eyes to penetrate the thick screen of straggling holly-bushes, deep bracken, and low-growing firs and junipers which stretched away behind it. She passed beyond the appointed place; and then came back, beginning to sing in a voice so soft and low as to be audible only to one close at hand, a few lines of the song which Roger Sandiland had appointed as a signal betwixt her and her unknown brother:

'Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow;
Sweet air blow soft, mount larks aloft,
To give my Love good-morrow!'

She had scarcely paused upon the note, when a man's voice, rich and musical in quality, took up the strain without hesitation:

'Wake from thy nest, Robin-red-breast,
Sing birds in every furrow;
And from each hill, let music shrill
Give my fair Love good-morrow!'

And almost immediately a young man, soberly dressed in russet-brown, and wearing his cloak drawn over the lower part of his face, according to a fashion much affected just then by gentlemen who had a mind to walk unrecognized, sprang from the thicket, and stood in the midst of the path before her.

Beatrice wavered a moment in her uncertainty; but this apparition in her path shewed no doubtfulness, no hesitation.

'So you have forgotten me, little Beatrice!' he cried; and there was a very winning gaiety in the tone of his voice, a bright and ready courtesy in his graceful bearing and manner. 'So you have forgotten me! And I myself, though with less excuse for such oblivion, am somewhat puzzled between past and present. You were scarce two years old when I kissed you last, and Father took me down to the London Docks in the dawn of a June morning, and put me on board the "Black-eyed Susan," with a mixed cargo sorted for Flushing. I was the sole passenger among the bales and hogsheads, I

remember; and mighty little I liked my circumstances. Faugh! what a voyage that was!—A thunderstorm and a squall of wind overtook us at the mouth of the Scheldt, and I prayed that the ship might go to the bottom at once, and have done with it. 'Twas no bad preparation, that, for a life in which many queer shifts have been necessary. The urchin was fairly started in the path the man was by-and-by to travel.—And how have matters fared with you, little sister of mine? I trust our very Protestant uncle, whose politics bear the true Orange complexion, and whose housekeeping is doubtless conducted according to the graceful German mode, has proved no churlish guardian?'

'Oh, Charles, Uncle Hunter has been

more than kind,' said Beatrice, her eyes filling with tears of gratitude and affection. 'There is no difference set between me, and Anne and Prue and Bessie—none whatever. I think Granny is the only person in the house who sometimes dwells upon the thought that I am not a Hunter but a Cope.'

Young Mr. Cope looked at his sister very earnestly, although he carried off the intentness of his scrutiny by means of a pleasant laugh and half-jesting entreaty.

'Call me Charlie, I beseech you, sweet mouse,' he said. 'Upon my faith! you have no notion how passing strange and serious that cognomen "Charles" sounds, as applied to a man hitherto known to friends and foes as Charlie. I suppose

'tis an inherent want of dignity in my unworthy person which renders my name such a conspicuous misfit. You are the only individual who has voluntarily addressed me as "Charles" since I went on board the "Black-eyed Susan." And so you have not been metamorphosed into a Hunter yet, Beatrice? How is that?—I would lay a heavy wager that pains have not been spared.'

Beatrice returned her brother's regard; and the full soft gaze of the clear grey eyes thus raised to his face was exceedingly satisfactory to the young man. She loved her uncle's family with the tender affection of a grateful heart; but there was a special fund of love left untouched —that love wherewith a woman cleaves to

'her own people, and her father's house.'

And the coming of this brother, given back to her as from the dead, was a great event in the life of Beatrice Cope.

The sense of thankfulness which filled her heart was very apparent in the next words she spoke.

'"Twas a strange heart-break that I felt, when Uncle Hunter gave me your buckle and clasps, and told me I had had a brother, and he too, like my parents, was dead,' she said. 'How should your death have been thus confidently affirmed, Charlie?—My uncle announced it to me as a fact indisputable.'

'Uncle Hunter was no ways loth to believe that which he heard, I fancy,' Charles Cope said, carelessly. 'He heard the news,

doubtless, from Mr. Templar of Goodrest, than whom a slyer old fox does not scout about the country. Reasons existed then, and do still exist, why 'tis desirable that I should be supposed to slumber under a marble slab in the Church of S. Gudule, nigh to the village of S. Germains. Do naught, I beseech you, to disturb that agreeable impression, Beatrice. Roger Sandiland may have told you that I am none too sure of keeping my neck out of reach of a hempen rope, while I linger in this vicinity. I am living snugly at Goodrest just now; a place as compared with which a Quaker's meeting is a lively and attractive scene. And although I verily believe the good Fathers in the Monastery of S. Bernard spend pleasanter and more

luxurious days than I do, Mr. Sandiland raised as much opposition to my beguiling the time by seeing you as he could have done had I proposed to look in upon the Elector of Hanover at Whitehall, in a friendly, unpremeditated way. After plotting and planning all one's life, one either grows wildly careless of risk, or else one magnifies danger and exaggerates caution. Mr. Sandiland oscillates between the two states of mind. Just now he has a prudent fit upon him; and would mew me up at Goodrest, like a linnet in a cage. But the sweet bird has a will of its own, and elects to twitter now and then in the gay green wood.'

'At risk of the forester and the woodman?' said Beatrice.

'Even so,' he replied, gaily.

And then, awaiting no answer, he enticed his sister to speak of herself, drawing her on from point to point, with the address of a man accustomed to extract information without direct questions asked. This unknown Beatrice won upon him greatly; her arch yet shy confidences, the vivid picture she gave him of her up-bringing at Crowe Hall, entertained him so well that the minutes flew upon rapid pinions, as they strolled backwards and forwards beneath the ominous shadow of the Forester's Ash.

Soon they seated themselves upon its knarled roots, half-uncovered where burrowing creatures had scraped away the light loose soil; and Charlie Cope sketched

a few striking incidents in his own stirring life, for his listener's edification. He told her of hairbreadth escapes by sea and land; of straits and necessities over which he laughed and made merry. But his face grew grave as he dwelt upon the sufferings of others, neither young nor strong like himself.

He was in this softened mood when Beatrice spoke of the distress which Mr. Sandiland's residence under their uncle's roof occasioned her; and he listened gravely, absently slashing away the bark from the ash-trunk with the point of a small walking-sword which he carried.

'I must be a traitor to my uncle, or a traitor to my father's friend,' said Beatrice. 'Charlie, it is a cruel dilemma. I entreat

you, end it for me speedily. Mr. Sandiland does not understand the suffering he inflicts, else surely he would not linger here.'

Young Cope looked up from his idle scoring of the old ash-tree.

'Would he not?' he said. 'You little know Roger Sandiland, if you imagine that any suffering of yours or mine would turn him from his purpose now, Beatrice. And indeed I can scarce blame him. We are but units in a great scheme.'

'What scheme?' asked Beatrice.

'Nay, but I think you know full well,' he replied; and fell to fresh excoriation of the much-jagged bark.

'I believe I do know; and, Charlie, does that knowledge make my position any

better, my line of action any clearer? Help me, advise me, you that are my brother. What can I do? Shall I give my uncle any hinted caution? shall I——'

'Not for your life!' he said.

His tone was low, and carefully suppressed, but inflexible as that of Roger Sandiland himself.

'A warning to the Squire now would cost more lives than you can count. Remain dumb, at all hazards; leave affairs to take their course; and do not you meddle with perilous stuff, Beatrice. Gunpowder is a harmless commodity when left to lie peacably in the dark; drop but one spark from the feeblest little rushlight as you pass by, and the inert mass explodes, wrecking heavy masonry, and tearing up

strong foundations. This business of ours may come to naught; it may end in smoke, as many a fair prospect before has ended. But if it prospers, it will prosper completely. Should three parts of our contingent redeem their pledges, Squire Hunter may have reason to rejoice that Roger Sandiland abode under his roof this summer; and still greater reason to rejoice that he and his have shown kindness to the sister of——'

He broke off with a smile.

'Shall I tell you my title, little Beatrice? Ah, 'tis pinchbeck all, at present; I care not for it. But one day 'twill be a genuine honour, to be prized by those who come after me as having been won by good service, toil, and blood.'

His eye lightened; there was no lack of dignity or purpose in his look just then, although as a rule he seemed to affect a slightly whimsical carelessness. He was a man of fair complexion, fine features, and a singularly attractive address—good points of which 'tis probable he was well aware, having estimated their value ere boyhood was over; and the impression he produced upon his sister was very favourable.

His talk delighted her; his evidence of affectionate interest in her welfare was still more gratifying. And before the young pair parted, Beatrice had heard much of Agnes Ingram, towards whom her heart ever turned, and of whom Charlie now spoke with a curious reserved

appreciation, in which there was no small element of reverence.

'They are very holy women, those at Goodrest,' he said. 'Truly, this Cause of ours embraces a strange medley. They see a different side of things to that which usually greets my eyes; and astonish me often by the quiet simplicity wherewith they assume that men of action look upon affairs even as they do from within their sheltering walls . . . I doubt they will be amazed one day, when the time of triumph comes. They will flutter dazzled in the sunshine; and wish, maybe, for their peaceful days of obscurity once more.'

'But Agnes has a father?' said Beatrice, wistfully.

'A father?—yes!—but one with whom she will scarce be very happy. Sir Hugh Ingram is a man of insatiable ambition. His Majesty will not find it easy to content Sir Hugh,' Charlie replied, a sarcastic smile curling his short upper lip.

'And she spoke of some one else—' said the girl, timidly.

'Did she so? Ah, well! that romance is scarce more hopeful than the one which filial piety spins around the grizzled head of rough Sir Hugh. Walter Bridgenorth is as other men are, little sister; there is small share of the hero or the saint in his composition, I assure you.—But imagination is a strong force; it may prevail to adorn him still, even when the silver streak no longer severs him from his be-

trothed. I would not trust to that, however, in his case.—Must we part, then, Beatrice? You will walk this way again, and sing that quaint and pretty strain with which you greeted me—how goes it?—

> "Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,
> With night we banish sorrow;
> Sweet air blow soft, mount larks aloft
> To give my Love good-morrow!"

Truly, a song of hope and cheer! And you have a wondrous sweet little voice; Robin red-breast himself could not chirp more blithely from his furrow. Farewell for the present, since prudence compels us to short and guarded meetings.'

He stooped to embrace her; and Beatrice, while his arms still encircled her, whispered, 'Had we not better wait to

meet again, until we can meet openly? Sure, for you 'tis but courting danger; and for me——'

She broke off, gazing round with startled eyes.

'Tis nought,' he said, 'silly one!—only a squirrel in the branches of yonder oak. You have a fine steady nerve, Mistress Beatrice, upon my honour!'

'Ah, 'tis the deceit!' panted poor Beatrice. 'Tis the reserve I must practise which makes a coward of me. For once—for one meeting—I would risk all; but, Charlie, do not come from Goodrest here again. You say yourself 'tis not prudent—Mr. Sandiland dissuades you; oh, be ruled!'

'Mr. Sandiland may freely say what he

pleases; with all deference, I intend to make use of my own discretion,' the young man said, haughtily. 'Tis not the first time that I have had to govern my actions without reference to Roger Sandiland, Beatrice. When I arrange a meeting, you may trust my prudence. Weighty matters hang upon my circumspection; I run no idle risks, whatever Mr. Sandiland may be pleased to imagine. I will compromise neither you nor myself; I have emissaries who can let me know when the coast is clear. But you must have a colder heart than I looked for, if you can speak with indifference of losing the chances of deepening our mutual affection and confidence, which this waiting time presents. When once the storm begins, I shall have brief

leisure for my nearest and dearest; when it is over, my head may either adorn the city gates of Newcastle, or toil in the service of a newly-constituted government. Either way, Beatrice, I do not think that you and I will have much time or opportunity for companionship. But, maybe'—and he shot a swift glance at her from the blue-grey eyes, in which an angry gleam appeared—'maybe the Whig uncle and aunt and cousins have taught you to mistrust a Jacobite brother. Maybe your affection for them outweighs any lingering love and duty towards me. They come first, without doubt. You have been happy here, sheltered from all risk and loss; while I have laboured to promote the Cause for which our father died. I

days. Farewell, little heath-blossom of rural wastes; do not forget the signal—"Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day!"'

He turned aside into the thicket, still humming snatches of the song which had caught his fancy.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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